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STUDIES  
IN  
MEDIÆVAL HISTORY.

BY  
CHARLES J. STILLÉ, LL.D.,

LATE PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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*SECOND EDITION.*

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1883

TO THE HONORABLE

J. I. CLARK HARE, LL.D.,

PRESIDENT JUDGE OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS No. 2,

PROFESSOR OF THE INSTITUTES OF LAW

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

ETC., ETC.

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MY DEAR HARE:

I was chosen a teacher of History in the University chiefly because you and another friend (of whom, alas! only the precious memory is now left us) expressed confidence in my capacity to perform the duties of that position. During the many years I held the office, I was not unmindful that you had been in some sort my sponsor; and, now that I have laid it down, I am prompted by a grateful remembrance of your unfailing kindness, and our long-unbroken friendship, to dedicate this book to you. It may interest you, for it contains some of the results of the work which you did so much to impose upon me.

With the highest regard,

Faithfully yours,

C. J. STILLÉ.

JANUARY, 1882.



## PREFACE.

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MY object in preparing these "Studies" has been to illustrate the life of the Middle Age by a sketch of some of its characteristic institutions. I have selected those prominent features in that life which it inherited from Roman and Christian society before the extinction of the Western Empire in 476, and which were moulded and shaped after that event by the peculiar ideas and habits of the barbarian invaders.

My experience as a teacher has convinced me that to the genuine student the unbroken continuity of history is its most attractive and instructive feature, and that so far as the Middle Age is concerned the most important lesson which its history teaches us is that, while it was mainly the outgrowth of a previous condition, it was also the source of much that is most valuable in our modern life and civilization.

These "Studies" are based upon a course of lectures—one of a series—which it became my duty to give in the University. They formed part of a scheme of systematic instruction in history in which my design was to indicate the "general stream of tendency" of historical events in Europe during the Christian era.

I have been requested by my old pupils to publish these lectures. Before doing so, however, I have thought it best to remodel and, to a certain extent, to rewrite them, so as to give them the form of general "studies" on the subject.

I may add that some knowledge of historical geography is very necessary to a full understanding of many of the questions which I have discussed in the following pages. The recent work of Mr. FREEMAN on this subject, and especially the maps appended to it, or the historical atlases of VON SPRUNER or of LABBERTON, will be found very useful for that purpose.

In the Appendix will be found a list of the principal authorities which I have consulted in preparing this work.



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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A SECOND edition of this book having been called for, the text has been revised and corrected, the Index enlarged, and various other changes have been made.

It is a cause of sincere satisfaction to the author to find that his work has proved useful to those for whom it was specially designed—that large and increasing class, both in our colleges and outside of them, who are pursuing advanced studies in history, and who are particularly desirous of acquainting themselves with the results of the latest investigations concerning the somewhat unfamiliar features of the life of the Middle Age.

MAY, 1883.



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# MEDIÆVAL HISTORY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEDIÆVAL ERA.

THAT period of the world's history embraced between the date of the downfall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 and the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 is commonly known as mediæval or Middle Age history. It is so called, doubtless, because it is supposed to occupy the intermediate space, at least in Western Europe, between ancient and modern history, and because it marks the period of transition from the one to the other. This period may be studied either as a most curious and interesting epoch in the world's history, in itself wholly unlike that of any age which preceded or followed it, or we may investigate it as the true groundwork of modern history, regarding a knowledge of its teachings as an essential introduction to a correct understanding of the great principles which underlie our modern civilization. The Middle Age was both a period of transition and of a formative process, when the forces which govern our modern life were slowly crystallizing. For

students of the general principles of modern history the chief interest in the history of the Middle Age lies in its being what may be called seed-time, or the stage of the early development of those ideas of religion, government, society, laws, and manners the full fruition and bloom of which we witness in our own days. What such students desire chiefly to know about it is not so much what was curious or picturesque and specially characteristic of life as it was then lived in Western Europe, as what there was permanent in it, and how it was inwoven in the framework of modern life, thus forming an act of that great drama of human history in which retribution is the law, opinion the chief moulding agency, and the advancement of the human race the *dénouement* and final result. We propose here to study the Middle Age, not as antiquarians, but as historians,—in other words, with reference to the influence of its life upon that of succeeding ages.

If we begin to study mediæval history with this object, we soon discover that we cannot understand the nature and historical character of its peculiar development until we trace the beginnings of its history back to sources beyond the period which I have assigned to the beginning of mediæval history proper,—that is, the extinction of the Western Roman Empire in 476. These sources we shall find in the characteristic life of the barbarians in their native forests, and in the laws, religion, and government of Imperial Rome, not only while she was mistress of the world, but also during

that long period of decline and decay in which the opposing forces of Christianity and barbarism were slowly changing her life and moulding her system for its new destinies, preparing her to rule the world by her laws, as she had once done by her arms. The general view of the Middle Age would be that of a stream fed from distant sources, at first a torrent, bursting from the forests of Germany, sweeping onward, so violent in its fury and so overwhelming in its force as for a time to destroy all trace of the work of civilized man, and then, long after, reappearing, swollen by its tributaries, as a mighty river, bearing upon its placid and ample bosom blessings of peace and comfort to those who dwell upon its shores.

Again, the general aspect of Europe during the Middle Age is that of a violent conflict, a struggle, not merely between the barbarian tribes and the legions of Imperial Rome, and of these tribes with each other, but also a constant struggle of opposing *ideas* for the mastery, of the Teuton against the Roman, of the North of Europe against the South, of Christianity against heathenism, of a savagery which has been compared to that of the North American Indians with the highest form of civilization then known to the world. In the midst of such terrible birth-throes modern civilization is brought into the world, and, unlike any other civilization in history, it owes its peculiarities and its characteristic strength to this violent conflict of opposing forces of which it is the resultant.

All this will appear more fully as we study the special development of the mediæval history. What we must first do is to consider the forces which thus struggled for the mastery, examine their nature and relative strength, their origin and historical development, and then we can better describe their conflict and final fusion with each other. These forces, for our purpose, may be considered as derived from two sources, Roman and barbarian life.

The four most powerful and active elements of mediæval society which were derived directly from the Roman civilization are—1, organized Christianity, or the Church; 2, the Roman organization and administration; 3, the Roman civil law as it relates to the rights of persons and property; 4, the general use of the Latin language. These are some of the seeds which Rome sowed in mediæval soil, and which have brought forth fruit abundantly ever since, both for good and for evil. To estimate the nature of the seed aright, we must first trace the history of its growth on Roman soil. This process will carry us in our search for the beginnings of mediæval history much farther back, as I have said, than the period of the downfall of the Western Empire in 476. We must, for instance, if we wish to comprehend the nature of the paramount influence of Christianity in the history of the Middle Age, study the reign of Constantine (306–337), when what had been previously only the proscribed creed of a few obscure fishermen became a powerful organization

in the Empire, the official religion of the Roman world, and its clergy shared in the power and majesty wielded by the Imperial Cæsar.

In the age of Constantine, too, the theory of Roman civil organization and government had reached its fullest development. The long peace which resulted from the adhesion by the Antonines to the policy of Augustus of refusing to extend the boundaries of the Empire, and which had been interrupted only by the successful efforts of his successors to repel the first invasions of the barbarians, had been favorable to the full development of what was characteristic in the Roman system of government. We must, at the outset of the inquiry, disabuse ourselves of the impression, which is a very natural one, that only what was good in the Roman system survived and helped the progress of civilization in succeeding ages. That portion of Roman history which fills the space between the reign of the Emperor Constantine and the downfall of the Empire in 476 is, as far as the preservation of the Roman Imperial system itself is concerned, a record of constantly progressive decay, feebleness, and corruption, ending finally in the absolute exhaustion of the Empire; and yet this very period is the one most fruitful in those influences which, in later ages and under different surroundings, have been most potent in shaping the course of history. Republican Rome had little to do, either by precept or example, with the modern life of Europe, Imperial Rome everything. The Middle

Age was built on its ruins. What then was there in this mighty system, from the time of the Emperor Constantine until its organization was destroyed by the permanent occupation of the soil by the barbarians, which has left so ineffaceable a mark upon the history of mediæval and modern Europe? What were the boundaries of the Empire, what was the character of its population, and what was its governing policy, when its power began to crumble before the fierce assaults of the barbarian tribes?

The limits of the Roman Empire in Europe were bounded, as is well known, by the course of the great rivers the Rhine and the Danube. This frontier had been deliberately settled upon by the far-seeing policy of Augustus and of Trajan. The policy which established it was only the expression of a sentiment universal among Roman statesmen at all times,—that the only real danger to the perpetuity of the Empire was the possibility of the invasion of its territory by the wild tribes on the other side of these rivers. They were regarded, naturally, as the most formidable barriers which could be interposed against such invasions. For nearly five hundred years this frontier, guarded by the larger portion of the military force of the Empire, served to preserve its territory, if not always from invasion, at least from permanent occupation, while the provinces on the Roman side of this frontier were carrying out, in entire unconscionableness of danger, to its fullest development, whatever was good or evil



in the Roman Imperial system. The population of the provinces capable of military duty was diminishing year by year; slavery had destroyed all development of trade and commerce and the means of recruiting the armies; the soil was cultivated by slaves only, and brought forth little; *latifundia*, or sheep pastures, took the place of farms cultivated by free laborers; the exactions of the tax-gatherers for Imperial purposes became each year more severe and oppressive, and the result was not merely the decay of industry, but a constantly decreasing population, while the soil no longer produced enough to nourish it in full vigor.

From these and a variety of similar causes it is evident that the canker-worm was at the root of Roman society; and yet the rulers of the Empire, heedless of the ruin that was threatening them at their own doors, could see no danger for the future, save in the black cloud which hung on the northeastern horizon.

The Empire during all this time was never, to a superficial observer, more prosperous. The province of Gaul, for instance, separated from those who coveted its territory and envied its civilization only by the river Rhine, was, during the first four centuries of the Christian era, in as flourishing a condition as any portion of the Empire. The highly elaborate administration of the Roman law was everywhere in full vigor in the three Gauls, and its system of organization was so well adapted to its ends that it worked as smoothly among the wild Celts whom Cæsar had subdued as if it had governed a province

at the gates of Rome. The country was filled with flourishing cities (not less than one hundred and sixteen in number from the river Scheldt to the Mediterranean),—not merely military posts on the frontier, like Treves (*Augusta Trevirorum*), Cologne (*Colonia Agrippina*), and Coblenz, for instance, but cities such as Bordeaux, Toulouse, Marseilles, Lyons, Vienne, Arles, Nîmes, and many others, in which everything was distinctively Roman, not merely the baths and amphitheatres, works of art and palaces, with all the appliances of luxury, but those true monuments of Roman civilization which we find wherever the Romans penetrated,—roads and aqueducts, and schools of rhetoric and eloquence. During all this time the Roman and the Gaul were becoming gradually fused together, and before the invasion of the German tribes Roman religion, Roman law, the Roman language, and Roman oppression and corruption were as characteristic of life in Gaul as they were of that in Italy.

It is impossible to imagine any two conditions of civil life more opposite than that of the Roman Empire and that of the Teutonic tribes on the other side of the Rhine and the Danube previous to the invasion. Before pointing out these characteristic differences and the points at which the fusion at last took place, it may be well to give a chronological sketch of the invasions.

The barbarians, as they were called by the Romans, and as they proudly called themselves, were moved in their invasions by two impulses. Not only were they

tempted to cross the Roman frontier by their covetous desire for the riches of the provincials, whose growing weakness they despised, but they were, in a sense, forced to do so from motives of self-preservation, for they were pushed onward by tribes in their rear still more warlike and savage than themselves. There were at least three successive waves of immigration moving at the same time towards the Roman frontier,—1st, the Teutonic; 2d, the Slavonian; and 3d, the Huns, or Mongols,—and the Roman Empire was to feel, before its downfall in the West, the shock of each of these successive waves.

Before the accession of Constantine, the first had swept over certain portions of the Empire, but Rome had strength yet left to check these irruptions and to drive back the invaders,—the Goths, the Alemanni, the Franks, and the Burgundians,—not, however, before they had marked their path by the destruction of the monuments of Roman civilization in Gaul, and had plundered the unfortunate provincials without mercy. It is interesting to observe how general was the alarm occasioned by these first invasions, which in the end were, as I have said, successfully repelled; how constant was the endeavor of such rulers as Diocletian, Constantine, Julian, and Theodosius, by various expedients, to keep the barbarians out of the territory of the Empire. Whatever else failed, the spirit of resistance to barbarian inroads never yielded. Sometimes the rulers resisted and beat back the invaders, sometimes bought them off, sometimes

took them into the military service of the Empire, sometimes tried to educate them or to incorporate them within their territory as recognized allies. But all these expedients, adopted and carried out by rulers of strong and commanding character, failed to avert what seemed to be the irresistible course of destiny. Nothing can prove more clearly how much strength and how much consciousness of the dignity of their position as guardians of civilization were left in the Romans, even in those days which we have been taught to regard only as periods of decline and decay, than these mighty and persistent efforts to guard the soil of the Empire from the pollution of invasion. And certainly it seems to me that there is nothing in Roman history grander than the spirit which led all the Emperors, from Constantine to Theodosius, to concentrate all the resources of the Empire for the accomplishment of this great object. But "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." What the result might have been had the Teutonic tribes been kept beyond the limits of the Empire, and, therefore, out of contact with Roman civilization, we cannot say. But this much is certain, that if these races had never crossed the Rhine and the Danube, and had been left to evolve a civilization from the unmixed elements of their own life, the great characteristics of modern Europe, the sentiment of nationalities, and Christianity organized as we know it, would not have existed.

✓ The permanent occupation of the Roman territory began in A.D. 395, with the Visigoths, on the death of

the great Emperor Theodosius, and that division of the Empire between his sons Arcadius and Honorius which gave to the first the Eastern and to the other the Western provinces. This arrangement was doubtless made by the great Emperor with the hope that the inroads of the barbarians might be thus more effectually checked; but it seems in the end only to have hastened the catastrophe. These Visigoths had taken refuge in the Roman territory south of the Danube from the threatened advance of the Huns. They were permitted to enter the army of the Empire, and upon the death of Theodosius they revolted, and Alaric, their chief, set about carving out a kingdom for himself within the Roman territory. With this object in view, he took possession of Thessaly and of Greece, and marched through the Illyrian provinces towards Italy. He was at first defeated by Stilicho, the Vandal commander-in-chief of the Roman armies; but he again advanced, and, after three sieges of Rome, he conquered the Imperial City in 410, which then fell (for the first time since the invasion of Brennus, the Gallic chieftain, seven hundred years before) into the power of the barbarians. Meantime, other tribes,—the Burgundians, the Suevi, and the Alani,—stimulated by the example of Alaric, poured down upon the plains of Italy. Their advance was checked by the skill and the courage of this same Vandal, Stilicho, and they were induced to leave Italy and occupy the territory of the Empire in Gaul and Spain,—the Burgundians the lands bounded by the Mediterranean, the Rhine, and the

Saône, and the Suevi and the Vandals ancient Aquitaine south of the Loire, and the whole of the Spanish Peninsula. There they remained until the Visigoths, under the successors of Alaric, tired of Italy, took possession, first, of the country between the Loire and the Ebro, and finally, after the departure of the Vandals for Africa, of the remainder of what is now called Spain. About the same time the Imperial authority ceased to exist in Britain, nearly all the legions having been withdrawn by Honorius to aid in the defence of Italy, while those who remained mutinied and set up an Emperor of their own. Thus in about forty-five years (395-440) the fairest portion of that great Empire which had ruled the world for more than four hundred years, and which had more than a thousand years of growth,—Italy, the largest portion of Gaul, Britain, Spain, and Africa,—fell, with the Imperial City itself, into the hands of the despoilers. Surely history has no more impressive lesson of the vanity of human hopes. But the work of the destroying angel was not yet completed. A small portion of Gaul still remained under the Roman power, and the new conquerors of the remainder were not to be left in quiet possession of their spoil. Attila, the chief of the Huns, or Tartars, with his vast hordes, invaded Germany and Gaul in 450, mainly, doubtless, with the object of plunder; but his defeat by the Romans and the Visigoths at the battle of Châlons, in 451, and his subsequent premature death, no doubt preserved Western Europe from the permanent

influence of a very large Tartar element. This, and the battle of Tours, in 732, where Charles Martel defeated the Saracens advancing from Spain, must be regarded as among the most decisive battles in history, for they defeated the design of those who were striving to extirpate or defile Christianity in Western Europe. Even after the defeat of Attila (451) some remnant of the Roman authority was still left in Gaul and Italy. But the most powerful of all the barbarian tribes, the *Franks*, whose original seat was in modern Holland and Belgium, burst with fury into the northern portions of Gaul, and defeated, under their chief Clovis, in 486, the Roman governor, and in a few years after, the Alemanni, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths, thus establishing a Frankish kingdom, embracing a territory including all Roman Gaul between the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Rhine, and the ocean, and destroying the last vestige of Roman power north of the Alps. The *Vandals* were already in possession of Africa, and had given several times nominal Emperors to Italy. The weakness and the beauty of that land tempted shortly afterwards another fierce horde of Teuton warriors, called *Lombards*, to assail it, and the last remnant of the once mighty empire of Rome was ruled for two hundred years by them, and until they were in turn subdued by the all-conquering Franks.

I have given merely a sketch of the invasion and occupation of the Roman territory by the barbarians, reserving what I have to say of the history, institutions,

and manners of these tribes, and their relations with the Roman civilization, for another chapter. What concerns us now is to know what there was left amidst the general wreck of the Empire which was capable of acting upon the invaders with such a persistent and controlling power as to completely change the current of the history of the world,—in short, what were the ideas of the Romans which in the end conquered those barbarians whom their arms had failed to subdue. I must confine myself to those permanent Roman influences which contributed most directly to this result. This inquiry will lead me necessarily to say something concerning the history in the Empire of that most potent of all forces in human affairs since it first began to move the world, viz., Christianity. Before the barbarians permanently occupied the Roman territory, this force had, in the Empire, gone through different stages of control over its life, from that of a mere moral power or influence to that of a thoroughly organized and powerful hierarchy.

It was the moral ideas which form the basis of Christianity, as they were preached, before the close of the second century, in every province of the Empire, which won converts. Disbelief and materialism were the characteristics of the educated class of Roman society; helplessness, hopelessness, and suffering, of the poorer. In Rome, the city, the republic, and afterwards the Emperor, were the real divinities. Religion there was an affair of state, and worship was maintained by a highly aristocratic class as its peculiar and exclusive function.



There was no proselytism at Rome, because, unlike the civil government, its religion never exacted universal obedience. To the Romans, religion was an affair of each country, and differing religions were tolerated within their bounds on that principle. While the comparatively easy means of communication between the more distant parts of the Empire helped the propagation of Christianity, still everything in the Roman fundamental conception of religious ideas was hostile to Christianity, as a catholic or cosmopolitan form of worship; and yet, strange paradox! it was by an adaptation of the Roman system of administration that the Church became in the end the most powerful of all organizations.

To the Roman, educated in these traditional ideas of religion, the dogmas of Christianity, which claimed a divine sanction, may not have been very attractive, but the precepts, the practical duties, and especially the promises of the new system won the hearts and excited the enthusiasm at least of the poor and suffering. To such persons the doctrines of the equality of all men in the sight of God, of fraternity founded upon a common redemption, the promise of a future life of happiness, the certainty of a day of judgment, and the near approach of the end of the world,—all this was, indeed, the gospel of consolation; and no wonder, speaking of human means only, that such a gospel was eagerly embraced by many. Of course, the idea of some plan of government or organization is inseparable from that of any religious system. Like other systems, the organization

of Christianity, when it was a voluntary society, seems to have been popular at first,—so far, at least, that it committed, to a considerable extent, the control of the election of the bishops or overseers in each town to the faithful, clerical and lay. Whatever may have been the early organization of the Christian Church, many of those moral duties which we recognize as based upon fundamental Christian ideas had become familiar not merely in Roman practice, but had been introduced into the Roman civil law, long before the reign of Constantine. It is not easy to trace clearly to the direct power of Christianity the origin of the more humane and enlightened views of moral rights and duties which became conspicuous in Roman practice, if not in Roman law, during the first three centuries. Still, it is impossible to believe that such changes in their moral conceptions could have taken place without its indirect influence at least. The greater sacredness of marriage, the punishment of infanticide, the suppression of the cruel gladiatorial shows, the mitigation of the evils of slavery by the consecration of the servile virtues, the urgent advocacy of the manumission of slaves, the redemption of captives, the organized plans for succoring the poor and afflicted,—all these things, and many others, which may be comprehended under the general name of charity, became conspicuous in the Roman world just in proportion as the warm blood of Christian life was poured into it. In every form of creed or change of doctrine which took place in the history of the Christian

Church it is well to remember that the one unchanged thing was the place occupied by these virtues in the Christian system. Nothing is more remarkable than that even among the rude barbarians, who looked with contempt upon weakness of any kind, and therefore despised qualities such as these, their gentle power won at last its way, and formed, under the fostering care of the Church, one of the most characteristic features of mediæval Christianity.

Let us consider now the manner in which the whole Christian system, both the practical duties it enforced and the doctrines which it taught, were propagated, or rather were made ready for infusion into the life of the barbarian tribes when they should come into contact with that Roman civilization of which organized Christianity formed so prominent a part. Apparently there was in it little likely to combine with anything then known of the peculiarities of these tribes.

I have already spoken of the primitive organization of the Church, and of the bishops, in one sense, as popular magistrates, as they were elected by the faithful. There were frequent meetings of councils of presbyters, presided over by the bishop, without whose advice and consent no changes of importance, even in matters of discipline, were undertaken. Out of this soon grew a hierarchy, in which the episcopal office was greatly magnified and the popular element lessened, metropolitans assuming authority over the bishops of a province, until at last the patriarchate of Rome, as the most important

See, if not in the whole world, certainly in the Western Empire, became recognized as entitled to the primacy, and afterwards to what is called the papacy. Long before the legal establishment of Christianity as the State religion, this organization, excepting, of course, the power of the patriarchate and the papacy, existed in the whole Western Empire, more or less perfectly carried out as the cities were more or less distant from Rome. Before Constantine, not only had Christianity been preached in every province and in every large city of the Empire, but bishops throughout its whole extent, even when the Christians were a proscribed and persecuted sect, were collecting from the faithful large sums of money as alms for the necessities of the Church and of the poorer brethren, and were enforcing discipline among their disciples by means of the Church censures, penance, and excommunication. So entirely had the system, even when it was a voluntary one, taken root in the Roman heart and life. When Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, in 313, the eighteen hundred bishops who then ruled the Christian world, as well as their clergy, were granted some extraordinary exemptions and privileges. They were freed from the obligation of service to the State, civil or military, and from the payment of all taxes; they were permitted to receive the donations and legacies of the faithful; which their zeal, stimulated by the example of the Emperor, made very abundant; and the cognizance of offences committed by the clergy was withdrawn

from the ordinary tribunals and transferred to that of the bishops. The lay judges were ordered to execute forthwith the decrees of the bishops, and the churches were made places of refuge for criminals, where the process of the civil law could not reach them.

In this legislation of Constantine regarding the Church, everything in the way of privilege seems inconsistent with the ancient Roman policy, to which nothing was more abhorrent than an *imperium in imperio*; but we cannot advance a step in mediæval history without discovering that this legislation is the soil out of which grew logically and naturally that Church organization which in so great a degree shaped the life of that age. The important inference to be drawn from this state of the relations of the early Church to the Empire is, that the power of the Church as an organization was the most active principle of life in the Roman world, from Constantine to the fall of the Empire,—that it had, so to speak, absorbed that life, and therefore became the most powerful agency in moulding the character of the barbarians when they came into contact with it. It is not too much to say that as the Empire lost unity and organization these grand characteristics of the Roman system of administration were transfused into the life of the Church, that body snatching the power from the hands of the dying Empire, and in its turn ruling the world by the same methods. Abundant illustration might be given of the truth of the statement that the Church had, within its sphere, become

the inheritor of the traditions of the Imperial power. Perhaps there is no more striking proof of it than in what is called the penance of Theodosius. This happened in 390, not a century after Christianity had received official recognition. The Emperor Theodosius, although one of the most orthodox of Emperors, was one of the most passionate of men. Incensed because the mob at Thessalonica had murdered one of his generals and a number of Roman soldiers, he took indiscriminate vengeance on the town by a massacre of many thousands of its unarmed inhabitants. But, while the Emperor was absolute despot, it appears that there was a power within the Empire stronger than he. That power was then represented by one of the most illustrious men the Church ever produced, St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan. When Theodosius, residing in that city, desired to present himself in the church, to participate as a good Christian in the service and the sacraments, he was forbidden by the archbishop to enter even its precincts until he had performed the penance imposed by the Church upon a man guilty of such a crime as the massacre at Thessalonica. In this transaction it is hard to say which excites our greatest wonder, the boldness and the courage of the priest who could thus defy the Emperor, or the assured position of the Church at that time, which made it necessary for the ruler of the world to obey its decrees without hesitation. So, take the famous scene of Leo the Great, Pope in 452, threatening the savage Attila—"the Scourge of God," as he was called—with the

vengeance of the Apostles Peter and Paul in case he should dare to assail Rome, or the same Pope successfully pleading with that other savage, Genseric the Vandal, that he should spare in Rome those objects at least which were under the protection of the successor of the Prince of the Apostles. Nothing is more remarkable in the history of the Empire during the period in which the barbarian tribes were gradually becoming settled in the provinces than that, when the civil power decayed, and the armies of the Empire failed, another power, wielded by different hands and exercised under totally different sanctions, but based in a certain measure upon the Imperial organization, not only became a substitute for it, but proved the only means of preserving order amidst the confusion produced by the irruption of these wild tribes.

Another element of Roman life which produced most important results in mediæval and modern history was the peculiar organization of the Empire as a system of government. Here, as in the organization of the Church, is the perpetual triumph of Rome. We can only refer to those portions of this complicated system which were in full vigor for nearly two hundred years before the fall of the Western Empire, and with the force of which, therefore, the invaders were brought more immediately into contact. The Roman government, at least from the time of Diocletian and Constantine, was a pure and absolute despotism. Whatever may have been the theory as to the proper methods

of election, the Emperor really owed his office to the acclamation of the legions on his accession. He was addressed as "the Lord of the Universe," even if he was a Christian; the principle of his rule was "*quod principi placuit vigorem legis habet*," and his real strength lay in the loyal devotion of the army. He was at the head of a vast and thoroughly organized system of centralization, and all the functionaries of the Empire were in the last resort responsible to him alone for their acts. His administration was based upon an elaborate system of law, which in many respects was so conformable to universal reason that it has formed the basis of the codes of some of the most enlightened nations of modern times,—of France, for instance, and, indeed, of all Latinized Europe and its colonies in the New World.

The Roman code was supposed to embody the historical policy of the Roman people in their legal relations with each other; but they had taken no direct part in its formation, and could in no way alter or amend it. This power was wholly in the hands of the Emperor, who made and unmade the laws to suit his Imperial policy. Nothing is more striking, when we remember the jealousy with which in the days of the republic the Roman citizens, in their *comitia*, or general assemblies, watched the proposal to enact new laws, than to find two such fundamental changes as the removal of the seat of government from Rome to Constantinople and the substitution of Christianity for paganism as the official religion of the Empire, effected, apparently, without open opposition



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and by a simple decree of Constantine. The power of taxation, too, was wholly in the hands of the Emperor; and when we add to this his complete control over the population for the purpose of recruiting his armies, we find combined what have always been throughout history the most potent instruments of government, the purse and the sword, and we may thus gain some true idea of the power of the military despotism of the Empire. With our modern views, such a system seems destructive of all the true ends of government. Not so thought the ancient world. To its contemporaries the excellence of the system consisted in the perfection of its administrative organization. It worked well as a governing machine in this sense, that it had given to the Roman people greater peace and security, and for a longer time, than any government then known in history. The Roman system had not only crushed out nationalities, but in its conception of universal sway the theory of separate nationalities was inadmissible. No one was ever willing to believe that Rome could die. To her own subjects the removal of the capital to Constantinople was a mere matter of convenience, which did not affect the principle of her life; even the Christians, when Alaric had sacked the city whose limits had not been polluted by the presence of armed enemies for more than seven hundred years, could speak of this catastrophe, through the words of St. Augustine, as the vengeance of God on the crimes and corruptions and cruelties of pagan Rome; but her organization, her method of

administration, from which the Church was soon to borrow so much, were constant themes of wonder and admiration and imitation. The barbarian tribes, even while they were destroying the monuments of ancient civilization, were, in one sense, conquered by them; and they believed as sincerely as did the Imperialists and the Christians that the perpetuity of Roman law and Roman administration formed part of the eternal order of human affairs. This profound belief we shall see exhibited all through the mediæval times. There was always a longing for the past, a dream of the restoration of Roman Imperial order as a cure for the confusion of the times, sometimes taking a more definite shape, as in the effort of Charlemagne, in the ninth century, to restore the Western Empire. Surely if any historical fact is well settled it is the universal supremacy of Rome. The force of her example was not spent in the rude mediæval age, when the only preoccupation of thoughtful men was to find a refuge from the evils of barbarism, but it has been all-powerful in modern times. No one can study the history of France in the age of Louis XIV., or in that of the First Napoleon when he was ruler of the Continent of Europe,—the new Charlemagne, as he called himself,—without being satisfied that the systems of both these masters of state-craft were formed on the Roman model. And indeed we might say the same of all other systems which now govern the world which are called Imperial. The genius of Rome inspires them all.

Some details of the forms of the provincial administration under the later Emperors are essential here. Western Europe was divided into two prefectures,—that of Italy, including the Illyrian districts east of the Adriatic, and Africa, and that of Gaul, embracing the three dioceses (then a purely civil and not an ecclesiastical division) Gaul, Spain, and Britain. These dioceses were divided into provinces, of which in Gaul proper there were seventeen, with a governor at the head of each. These governors were the Emperor's immediate representatives, vested with his powers for the collection of taxes, the management of the public domain, the levy and regulation of troops for the army, and with the whole civil and criminal jurisdiction within the province. This system of government was somewhat modified or supplemented by the exercise of certain functions intrusted to the towns, or *municipia*, in the provinces. The original Roman system was that of a government by cities, known to its law as *municipia*, each *municipium* being entitled to certain privileges and exercising certain powers of local self-government. The Imperial policy was a policy of centralization, and in a great measure diminished the importance and privileges of these *municipia*. Still, in the decline of the Empire they were important adjuncts in the administration of the government, not of their local affairs only, but of the general and Imperial system. Each *municipium* was administered by a body called the *curia*, and its members, chosen from the wealthier

inhabitants and possessing a hereditary right to office, were called *curiales*. These towns in all the provinces of the Empire had grown numerous and rich during the long peace. The principal business of the town councils, in the latter days of the Empire, was to collect the public taxes. Their members were personally responsible for the amount of the tax imposed if they failed to collect it from those by whom it was due, even for that levied upon lands which had been abandoned by their proprietors. Their position was simply that of agents of the Imperial treasury, and the office, as may readily be supposed, was rather in the nature of a burden than a place of profit. The compensation granted by the government to the *curiales* for thus making them universal tax-gatherers, or rather universal tax-payers, was exemption from torture and corporal punishment, which might be employed in the case of the other inhabitants.

Such were some of the prominent characteristics of the Roman organization when the Western Roman world was overrun by the Teutonic tribes. I have referred only to those which history shows us affected most powerfully the ideas and at last transformed the life of these barbarians. Christianity, organized after the Roman pattern, the Imperial administration, and the recollections of the greatness of Rome under this system were among the most powerful influences in producing such a result. Is it not strange that in this mass of moral putrefaction, as it has been called, should lie

hidden the germ of our modern life? We must watch carefully its development and its surroundings through a long course of ages before we can understand how Divine Providence brought light out of such darkness.

There is but one other Roman influence aiding in the propagation of Roman and especially of Christian ideas to which we can refer here, and that is the substitution of the use of the Latin for the native languages in the provinces of the Empire during the latter days. One illustration must suffice.

Let us recall the superscription which was placed by Pilate on the cross, notwithstanding the earnest protest of the Jewish rulers: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin." In this inscription of Pilate there seems to be an unconscious prophecy of the future destiny of the world. From that cross, and through the channel of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin civilizations, have radiated all the influences which have made modern life the precious inheritance it is. That cross was set up at the point of confluence of those three great civilizations of antiquity which have ever since profoundly affected the condition, public and private, of the people of Western Europe. The Hebraic monotheistic conception of the Deity, the Greek universal reason, and the Roman power, and especially its language, have been the great secondary means of the propagation in that portion of the world of Christian civilization. In the West, Roman law, Roman Christianity, and Roman power went

together into the most remote regions, and won their triumphs on the same fields, and by the use of the same Latin language. By means of this Latin language Roman civilization was presented to the minds of the barbarians as including many things outside the domain of force, and conquered them, when force failed, by appeals to their reason and their hearts. It was the Latin language in the service of the Church, and in the administration of the law of the Empire, which taught the barbarians in what the true power and glory of Rome and the perpetuity of her system consisted, and thus was made an important step in their preparation for the reception of that new civilization of which the Roman language was the vehicle, as the Roman organization was the motive force.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BARBARIANS AND THE INVASIONS.

WE are now to consider the hostile forces with which this proud Roman civilization came in contact during the invasion and conquest of the territory of the Empire by the German tribes. We are concerned here rather with the nature of those forces than with the history of the military occupation of the soil, and especially with the long struggle between the habits, manners, and moral sentiments of the barbarians and the totally opposite characteristics of Roman life and its result. When we reach this result, by studying the development of these forces and the gradual process by which they were brought into something like harmonious co-operation for the practical purposes of government, we shall know something of the groundwork of the true life of the Middle Age. We shall thus gain, too, some insight into the sources of modern civilization, which we can trace to this strange combination of the Roman and Teutonic elements. Such a combination is very rare in history. We find very few instances in the long list of conquests where the peculiar civilization of the conquerors and the conquered flourished side by side, and where that which was fittest in each survived and gradually coalesced.

All the tribes which successively invaded and permanently occupied Western Europe were of the Teutonic race. They were many in number and in name,—Goths, Burgundians, Suevi, Alemanni, Vandals, Lombards, Franks, and Saxons,—but they were all of the same great race, and had the same origin in the great Aryan migration from Asia. Although, of course, they differed in many respects, yet in their fundamental ideas concerning government, religion, and manners, so far as they were guided by these ideas in their relations with the Romans, there was among them all a strong family likeness. At the time of the invasion, all these tribes, save the Franks and the Saxons, were nominally Christian,—that is to say, they were Arians,—holding a form of belief from which most important results were to follow, as we shall see in their subsequent history. But, relatively to the Romans, all the tribes were equally barbarous, and their barbarous peculiarities had the same root, and, as we shall see, were developed in each in pretty nearly the same manner after the invasion and conquest of the Empire. The country from which these tribes came may be roughly described as that portion of modern Europe lying north of the Danube and between the Rhine and the Vistula, the Scandinavian Peninsula, and certain portions of Russia. Their normal condition was that of wanderers, as the Germans called them, and the chief occupation of all the active and able-bodied among them was either hunting or war. The warriors, like the braves of the North



American Indians, despised industry and loved fighting. From the earliest period of Roman history the people in Italy lived in a perpetual apprehension (which subsequent events only too well justified) lest their country should be overrun by these ferocious savages. The greatest danger, indeed, which, up to the time of its occurrence, had threatened the republic was the invasion of its territory by the Cimbri and the Teutones, who were driven back by Marius; and Cæsar's conquest of Gaul, like Charlemagne's conquest of the Saxons, was prompted, no doubt, quite as much by a determination to extirpate the source of danger by subjugating the fierce tribes in that region as by a wish to extend the limits of the republic.

These tribes for the most part lived originally in Germany, in what are called "village communities," the primitive Teutonic system, in which, while each homestead was the private property of the head of the family, and was ruled solely by him as *paterfamilias*, the cultivable land was the common property of all the families of the village or township, and was tilled by them. They were not crowded together in large towns, as the Romans were,—a peculiarity, as we shall see, of immense importance in subsequent European history. The villages were combined into districts, which were governed by a chief called *graf*, or count; but in each district assemblies of representatives of the village were held frequently, and decided the most important questions, both as to their home government and the warlike

expeditions of the tribe. Larger confederations, made up of a greater number of tribes, were also formed on the same principle and with the same object. The people of these tribes consisted of nobles, lesser and greater, freemen, as they were called, all of whom took part in war and in the tribal assemblies, and slaves, concerning whom the distinction must be made that one portion of these so-called slaves were the peasants or serfs, *adscripti glebæ*, and the other the true domestic slaves, most of them prisoners of war, between which classes the difference became gradually greater and more marked after the tribes had occupied for some time the Roman soil. We must confine ourselves, in our account of them, to those special characteristics which became afterwards prominent in their relations with the Romans.

Their religious belief, of which some mention has been made, founded upon the Scandinavian mythology, was perhaps the best expression of the spirit which from the beginning animated these warlike races. Christianity had at the period of the invasions, under the form of Arianism, supplanted, at least among the more Southern Gothic tribes, the worship of Odin and his fellow-divinities, and perhaps the difference in the outward forms of Christian worship, observable all through history, between the nations of Northern and Southern Europe, may be traced with some confidence to the influence of this Scandinavian mythology. But the tribes who made the first serious assaults were Goths, and were Christians, even if they were called heretics. The earliest

of all the missionaries among them was the celebrated *Ulphilas* (348–374), commonly called “the Apostle of the Goths,” who spent a large portion of his life among that portion of the great Gothic race which inhabited what is now Southern Russia, engaged in the praiseworthy and successful endeavor to teach these barbarians literally their letters, translating the Bible into the written language he had formed, and striving to civilize them after the Roman pattern by imparting to them a knowledge of that form of Christianity which had been fashionable in Constantinople when he was educated there. From the Goths the belief in Arian Christianity spread to the Suevi, to the Alani, and to the Burgundians, before they invaded the Empire. This conversion, nominal, if we may so regard it, of vast bodies of these fierce barbarians, who despised the weakness of the Romans and were preparing to invade the country whose national religion they had just adopted, seems a marvellous result of the zeal and labor of the apostle *Ulphilas*. How all this came about is an historical question of considerable obscurity. One thing seems very clear; however. Their conversion, as well as the extraordinary forbearance and even respect shown both by Alaric and Theodoric, Gothic kings, who were both Arians, towards the Catholic hierarchy in their invasion of Italy, are well-attested historical facts. Moreover, the toleration of the Catholic worship and belief in Gaul by the Arian chieftains after they had subdued that province, is conclusive that under the Arian system

the barbarians had been successfully taught something of that charity and good will which, according to our ideas, but not to those of mediæval times, are inseparable from true Christianity.

But, whatever may have been the influence of Christianity upon the Teutonic tribes up to the time of the invasion, it is certain that they continued to be warriors, and warriors after the ancient manner of their own race. Now, with that race, while force was the means, courage, which taught them that the brave warrior never died, but only changed his abode, was the inspirer of their life. With this object in view, death on the field of battle became the great end of life. The Romans always looked upon them with astonishment, as they observed that they had overcome the most terrible of all fears, the fear of death. The young Roman when he reached what was called the virile age was invested with a toga, as a sign of his readiness to undertake the duties of a citizen; the young German, on the contrary, at the same age was armed, in the midst of the tribe, with a buckler and a javelin, and he had not perfected his title to manhood or to rank as a warrior until he had killed at least one man in battle. Their Scandinavian religion taught them the existence of a future state, and by some it has been thought that this belief paved the way to the reception of the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul; but when we remember that all persons not dying on the field of battle were excluded from the Valhalla,—the Scandinavian heaven,

—the inference seems somewhat strained. Accompanying this warlike temper, of which Christianity as taught them only changed the direction and the motive, the sentiments of a love of equality and of personal independence were among the most conspicuous peculiarities. These are the qualities which are supposed by some historians to be the chief gifts of these tribes to our modern life; and, however that may be, it is certain that in no respect was the Teutonic condition more entirely in contrast with that of the life of antiquity than in this. Throughout the ancient world the State was everything, the individual nothing. The practice was reversed in the case of the barbarians, and in their mode of life it was impossible that the principle of individualism should not be greatly developed.

Equality with them, of course, did not mean a claim founded upon what are sometimes called natural rights, still less was it that kind of equality which prevailed in the Roman Empire, where all were equal, it is true, before the law, but the equality was an equality of slaves. But the boast of the barbarian freemen was that a true equality, founded on the supposed common possession of honor, courage, devotion, had always been recognized among them as their most precious inheritance. And they pointed for proof of this claim to what has been sometimes deemed a feature of the existence of an aristocratic system among them,—the practice which was common among the young warriors of devoting themselves absolutely to the service of some renowned chief,

with no other hope of reward, at least in the earlier times, than a share in the glory he achieved. In this relation, individualism was stimulated to the utmost, while it was inseparably linked with loyal and devoted service to a superior. This is the true ideal of the highest human service, never perhaps fully realized except in our relations towards Him "whose service is perfect freedom." No doubt, too, we find here the germ of all that was best in the feudal system as a form of human government, although at no time can it be fairly described, at least when that system was fully developed, as having been in practice (to use the fervid rhetoric of Burke) "the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise," or as "maintaining that subordination of the heart which kept alive in servitude itself the spirit of an exalted freedom." There can be no doubt that this sentiment of loyalty to a chief, combined with pride in their personal independence, had a permanent effect upon the history of the races which conquered the Empire, even forming a distinguishing mark at the present day between those nations purely Teutonic and races more or less Latin in their origin.

Another contribution made by the barbarians to the peculiar characteristics both of mediæval and of modern times was their earnest conviction of the sacredness of the life of a freeman as distinguished from that of a slave. Slaves, as we all know, held their lives, as well as their liberty, very much at the arbitrary caprice of

their masters, both among the Romans and during the mediæval age; but while crimes against the person or property were always punished in Rome, as they are with us, as offences against the majesty of the State, no crimes among the barbarians committed by freemen, except perhaps treason, were made capital offences, but were rather regarded as injuries to the individual or to his family, for which atonement could be and was made by the payment of money, proportioned not so much to the gravity of the offence as to the rank of the offender or his victim. The sum to be paid was called by the Germans the *weregeld*, and the principle upon which this kind of satisfaction for crime was made is not unknown to our modern criminal law. With this, another peculiarity has left at least a trace in modern law, and that is the practice by which the denial of the party accused, supported by the oaths of certain *compurgators*, as they were called, declaring that they believed that such a denial was true, was considered as judicially equivalent to its truth when established by evidence from other sources. When no other testimony was accessible, a resort was had to trial by battle, as it was called,—in other words, to a fight between the parties or their champions,—which was supposed to be an appeal to God's judgment to settle the dispute according to right. The barbarian codes, especially those of the two great families of the Frankish tribes, the Salian and the Ripuarian, are filled with minute regulations in regard to these subjects, showing not merely the permanent

characteristic traits of the people, but how utterly un-Roman they were, and how difficult and tedious must have been the process by which they were combined and assimilated with the manners and ideas of the countries which they invaded.

As to this word "invasion," there is some liability to misapprehension from its use. The invasion of the barbarians was not like the torrent which overwhelms, but rather like a slow, persistent force which undermines, disintegrates, and crumbles. The Germans were not strangers to the Roman Empire when they began their conquests. As far back as the battle of Pharsalia, the victory over Pompey was decided by the Gallic auxiliaries enlisted by Cæsar in the service of the republic. It is well known that many of the Roman Emperors were barbarians who had been successful soldiers in the Imperial army; that military colonies were established on the frontiers composed of men of various races under the control of Roman discipline; that the Goths, before they revolted against the authority of the Emperor, were his chosen troops; that the great Alaric was a Roman general; that the shores of the Danube and the Rhine, which marked the limits of the Empire, were lined with cities which were at the same time Roman colonies and peopled with men of the Teutonic races. When the barbarians did actually occupy the territory their movement seems at first to have been characterized by a strange mixture of force with a sentiment of awe and reverence for the Roman name. In Italy and in



Gaul they appropriated to themselves two-thirds of the lands, but they sought to govern their conquests by means of the Roman law and administration, a machine which proved in their hands, by the way, a rather clumsy means of government. They robbed the provincials of all the movable property they possessed, but the suffering they inflicted is said not to have been as great as that caused by the exactions of the Roman tax-gatherer. The number of armed invaders has doubtless been exaggerated. The whole force of the Burgundian tribe, whose territory, in the southeast of modern France, extended to the Rhone at Avignon, did not, it is said, exceed sixty thousand in all, while the armed bands of Clovis, who changed the destinies not only of Gaul but of Europe, were not greater than one-tenth of that number. The great change in their life was, as I have said, that they ceased to be wanderers; they became, in a measure at least, fixed to the soil; and, in contrast with the Romans, they preferred to live in the country and not in the towns. In this they followed their Teutonic habits, little knowing what a mighty change this new distribution of population was to cause in the social condition of Europe. They retained, too, their old military organization, and, after attempts more or less successful to use the Roman administration for the ordinary purposes of government, they abandoned it, and ruled the countries they conquered by simple military force, under their Dukes and Counts, the Romans generally being allowed in

their private relations to govern themselves by the forms of the Roman law.

I have spoken of the peculiarities of the Teutonic tribes as if they were common to the whole race. But it is to be remembered that there were differing degrees of civilization among them at all times. The Goths, both Eastern and Western, were certainly far more advanced in this respect than the Franks or Saxons. The object of their great king, Theodoric (Ostrogoth, as opposed to Visigoth), as declared by him in his conquest of Italy, was to restore the Roman name with Gothic strength, while the codes of the Visigoths in Spain, the united work of the nobility and bishops of that country, are strongly marked by the influence of Roman law. Even the fierce and untamed Franks shared the sentiment of awe and veneration with which the Roman name was still regarded in the most remote regions. Certainly no picture in history is more curious than the triumphal display made by Clovis of the title and purple robe of the Roman patrician and consul which had been sent to him by Anastasius, the Emperor at Constantinople, after the Franks had conquered the last remnant of Roman Gaul. It would seem that a Roman title was needed by popular sentiment in this case, as in that of Pepin afterwards, to transform a king *de facto* into one *de jure*. There was, too, of course, a great difference in the character of the permanent influence of the barbarians in those countries, such as Britain and Northern Germany, which, owing to their remoteness, had never been fully

civilized after the Roman pattern, and in those, such as Gaul and Spain, where the civilization had long been identical with that of Italy. Making allowances for these differences, we may say that the invaders in the fourth and fifth centuries brought into the Western Roman Empire by their invasions four distinct, permanent influences or tendencies, viz. :

1. The principle of representative government, as shown in the assemblies of freemen, where the common interests and military enterprises of the tribe were discussed and settled.

2. The principle of royalty in a new form. The king must be of a divine descent, but his election, also, by his fellow-warriors was essential.

3. The sentiment of devotion or loyalty to a chieftain, constituting the relation of military patronage.

4. A strong feeling of personal independence.

We come now to speak of the influence of Christianity upon the barbarian tribes after they had occupied the Roman territory, and of the conversion of those who remained outside its limits. This influence, organized by the Church in both cases, was the great agency which made possible a real fusion of the opposing Latin and Teutonic ideas when they came in contact, and thus has much to do with the growth of the life of the Middle Age. We must always bear in mind that the Christian system was the only exponent of the grand principle of the visible unity of government then recognized in the world, as the Roman Imperial system had been, and that

it claimed, as Rome had done, to bring under the same allegiance not only the Greek and the Roman, but all men, whether barbarian or Scythian, bond or free. It had faith in its mission, which it never lost, even in its darkest days. Indeed, the power of the Church immediately after the downfall of the Empire, in the midst of the confusion which then prevailed, may be compared to what the metallurgists call a flux, reducing to a state of fusion and homogeneity the rebellious elements of which European life was then composed.

In the time of Constantine, Christianity, under the organization of bishops more or less controlled by the action of both clergy and laity, was established not only in Italy, but in all the provinces of the West,—in Illyria, in Africa, in Gaul, and in certain portions of Britain. Nominally under the general supervision of the Emperor, the Church formed a veritable *imperium in imperio*, with its own laws, officers, revenues, and powers of administration. While the Imperial power was being undermined by corruption and weakness within and by fierce assaults from without, the Church grew stronger and stronger every day. It was like the ark of God in the desert: no profane hand was bold enough to touch it, and where it rested there alone was safety. While all else that was Roman was crumbling or being submerged, the Church alone, in its power over the wills and passions of men, stood erect and undaunted. We must not think of it, then, as a mere teacher of morals, or even as an exemplar of Christian virtue only. In all

the provinces and in the larger towns the clergy filled all the important offices, and they assumed those municipal functions exercised by the *curiales* which had been given up by laymen because their performance entailed ruinous sacrifices on those who held them. Wherever in these calamitous times there remained in any of the cities an official *defensor populi*, whose chief business it was to protect the people against arbitrary taxation, the holder of this office, who inherited some of the authority of the old tribunes, was sure to be a bishop. It is not going, indeed, too far to say that when the Emperor Justinian gave to the bishops by decree a sort of general *surveillance* over all the public functionaries of the Empire he was merely confirming by law a practice which had long existed. The intercession of the Bishop of Rome with Alaric, with Attila, and with Genseric, appealing to those victorious chieftains to spare the city of Rome from the horrors of a siege, must be regarded not merely as the courageous performance of a Christian duty on the one side, by which superstitious terrors were aroused on the other, but also as an assertion of an official authority, the claims of which were generally recognized. The Arian Goths, as has been said, while they appropriated to their own use two-thirds of the lands in Italy, did not touch the churches of the Catholic faith.

For various reasons, then, when the Roman authority was withdrawn from the Gallic provinces the Church was not merely the only organized element of government

left there, but in one sense it was never more powerful or prosperous than after the occupation of the country by the barbarians. It had, through the devotion of the faithful, increased in riches as well as in power, and in this way, it is said, it had lost something of its early zeal and purity. However that may be, it is certain that before the fifth century closed there was not only in Gaul, but generally throughout the West, that practical recognition of the authority of the Church, and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome as its head, which, however unlike it may have been to the doctrine of the papal supremacy of later days, still bound all Western Christendom in bonds more or less close to the See of St. Peter. This is not the place to discuss in what way this supremacy was established. The fact remains, that by this thoroughly organized system Christianity was spread and the Church governed for more than a thousand years. The changes produced in the world's opinions and destiny by these events must be regarded as second in importance in their far-reaching results only to those caused by the introduction of Christianity itself. Whatever else was involved in them, they substituted the unity of the Roman Catholic faith, worship, and government for the unity of Roman power, law, and administration. The city of God, as St. Augustine says, was to be built upon the ruins of the Imperial mistress of the world.

Let us study some of the steps in this process as history shows them to us. Beginning with a recognition

of the fact that in the fifth century the Popes were regarded practically as heads of the Church in Western Europe, the question is, how they reduced the barbarian conquerors to the obedience of the Catholic faith. We must, of course, confine ourselves to the consideration of a very limited part of their work; and yet its results were of the most far-reaching kind. We must remember that at that time there was really no line drawn, as there is now, between laws regulating civil and religious life. The relations of each to the other were inextricably blended. It seems a small thing to say that for more than two centuries the Church bent all its energies to the extirpation of Arianism and to the conversion of the Northern barbarians, and that the master-statesmen of that day, Popes Leo I. and Gregory the Great, directed its policy; and yet it means that through these agencies the destiny of the whole world was changed.

As has been said, the tribes which occupied the Empire at its downfall—the Goths, the Alani, the Suevi, the Burgundians—were Arians. Among the Roman population of Western Europe they were no doubt quite as much hated as heretics as they were feared as invaders. The orthodox Church in the provinces, except perhaps in Africa, seems, notwithstanding their presence, to have preserved its organization unimpaired. If any efforts were made for the conversion of the Arians by pacific means, they were unsuccessful. The Church, too, in its efforts to reduce the barbarians to obedience, resorted to

that singular combination of force and persuasion, and that extraordinary power of improving the opportunities which presented themselves to her, which, speaking now only of merely human means, have made the organization of the Roman Church the most powerful and effective for its purpose of any which the world has ever seen.

It has already been said that the Frankish tribes in their original strongholds along the course of the middle and lower Rhine were, with the exception of the Saxons, the only invaders of the Roman territory not nominally Christian. They, too, were the last of the invaders, at least while a shadow of the Roman authority remained. They were always regarded as the most untamed and ferocious of all the Teutonic tribes, and, as the event proved, were able not only to extinguish all Roman authority in the West, but to acquire and retain a supremacy over the other barbarians who had previously occupied that portion of the Empire. The history, then, of the Frankish domination in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Germany, and especially its conflict with whatever was distinctly Roman,—its religion, its language, its manners, and the faint traces of life still left in its *municipia*,—that history, from Clovis to Charlemagne, is the history of the beginnings of modern Europe.

The Franks, or, as they were afterwards called, the *Merovingians* (sea-warriors), occupied, in the middle of the fifth century, the territory forming a part of modern Holland and Belgium and a considerable portion of what are now known as the Prussian Rhine provinces,



on each side of the river. The tribe was composed of two branches,—the one the Salian (the northern), and the other the Ripuarian. They became united for the purpose of conquering Gaul, and did not differ much, except that the Ripuarians, owing to their nearer contact with the Romans, had become somewhat more tractable than the Salians. In the year 481 Clovis was chief of the Salian Franks, and began his conquests. In 486 he defeated the Roman patrician Syagrius, who maintained a power supported by scarcely anything but the Imperial name. Ten years later the Alemanni, one of the most warlike of the Teutonic tribes, who were disposed to dispute with the Franks the great prize of Roman Gaul, were entirely crushed; and still later the Burgundians, on the upper Rhine and in the southeastern portion of France, were overcome, and their kingdom, in a few years afterwards, destroyed; and last, and most important of all, the great Visigothic kingdom, south of the Loire and extending to the Pyrenees, was attacked, and only that portion of it which now forms the larger part of the Spanish Peninsula remained in the hands of the descendants of Alaric.

There is only one way, it seems to me, to account for this rapid and complete subjugation by the Franks of tribes of the same race whose numbers were far greater than those by whom they were attacked. These conquests were no doubt due in a large measure to the power of the Church, and the baptism of Clovis in 496 marks the beginning of a most important era in the

history of Europe, in which priestly power was, if not absolutely substituted for armed force as a means of supreme rule, at any rate so inseparably blended with it for many centuries as to shape the policy of European governments. Clovis, it is true, when he began his conquests was a heathen, but, as he was at least not an Arian, he was regarded by the bishops in Gaul as a fitting instrument in the hands of Divine Providence for extirpating that hated heresy. Personally he seems to have been, both before and after his conversion, one of the most bloodthirsty and ferocious savages of whom history makes mention; but these were qualities by no means inconsistent in those days with a reputation for orthodoxy, and at any rate all this was forgotten by the bishops in their zeal to suppress the open profession of heresy. We are told by grateful contemporaneous churchmen that at the baptism of Clovis the angels in heaven rejoiced. Those who truly loved God on earth were made glad, it is said, on this memorable occasion as the bishop, St. Rémy, gave him this short summary of Christian doctrine: "Learn, Sicamber, to burn what thou hast adored, and to adore what thou hast burned."

The reasons given by the bishops (who repaid the toleration extended to them by the Visigothic monarch by encouraging the invasion of his country) for the success of Clovis are very significant in deciding as to whose benefit the invasion enured. "Clovis," they say, "confessed the Trinity. He destroyed the heretics, and thus extended his conquests in Gaul. Alaric (the

Visigothic king) denied the Trinity. He was deprived of his kingdom, of his people, and of what was more important, eternal life." It was evident that Clovis himself knew what was expected of him, and upon whose power he could rely. With new-born zeal he exclaimed, "I am grieved because these Goths, who are Arians, inhabit the best part of Gaul. Let us assail them, with the aid of God, and drive them out and possess their lands!"

There is a strange mixture of religion with an inborn love of plunder in these proceedings, characteristic of the time. We cannot, of course, defend such an alliance by any reasons which would be regarded as satisfactory now, but there is no doubt that it was thought perfectly natural and legitimate at the time; and as little, in my opinion, that it was one of those cases which we meet with so frequently in history in which God, in his own way, has brought good out of what seems at the time to have been unmixed evil. Strange as it may seem, a vast deal of what is most characteristic of our modern system is due to the suppression of Arianism, or rather to the substitution of the organized Catholic Church for it in the regions in which it had been the dominant system. For the conquests of Clovis in Gaul gave the death-blow to Arianism, or rather to its political power everywhere. The Visigoths were driven into Spain, and were there, some time afterwards, induced by the orthodox bishops to adopt the creed of Nicæa, and thus to perfect the religious unity of the

Christian population. The Vandals in Africa, who had been the most obstinate of the Arians, yielded to the Catholic Church, while Belisarius, in the last display ever made of the ancient Roman energy, broke up the kingdom of the Ostrogothic Arians in Italy.

The Frankish kings of the Merovingian race, on the whole, kept good faith with the Church, to whose influence they were so much indebted for their extensive dominion in Gaul. These rulers, unlike those who reigned at Constantinople, had neither the inclination nor the capacity to meddle with mere theological questions. The Church was not only undisturbed in the profession of its dogmas, but the rude warriors of the Franks embraced the faith with a zeal that was not less enthusiastic because it was on some points blind and undiscerning, and savoring somewhat of the sentiment with which they had formerly regarded Odin and his fellow-divinities. But the Franks did not interfere with the internal organization of the Church. The bishops, indeed, became more powerful than ever. On the one hand, the popular element which in the beginning influenced so much their election and administration was gradually eliminated, and on the other the principle of that aristocratic organization which gradually destroyed the control of their chiefs by the assemblies of freemen—the fundamental basis, as we have seen, of the Teutonic organization—was transferred into the Church also. The bishops became powerful, not merely as ecclesiastics, but as great lords with large possessions and great

powers. Their wealth increased enormously, both from donations and legacies; they had the right not merely of trying the clergy for criminal offences in their own courts, but also of settling there questions concerning property which might arise in which any officer of the Church should be a party. They had not merely the right to receive donations and inheritances, but also to administer as they thought best, and for such objects as they might designate, their revenues. The Church estates were free from taxation, and in this age rose the pretension, which was never given up by the clergy until the French Revolution, that the Church should pay no taxes, because it served the king by its prayers. But with these pretensions came the civilizing and refreshing influence, in that wild time, of true charity. The right of asylum, or refuge from the avenger of blood, hospitals for lepers, provisions for the sick and poor, cathedral schools, religious houses, in which the inmates, by precept and example, sought to reclaim the earth from the spoliation of fierce and cruel men and make it yield its fruits for the use of God's poor,—all these we must never lose sight of, even if our object be merely to ascertain how the Church conquered the barbarians. We shall find that the Church's power was not really founded on the Church's pride, but on its charity.

It is true that many very unfit men among the higher Frankish nobles, no doubt attracted by the splendor of the position of the bishops, thrust themselves at times

into the hierarchy; but, whatever may have been the scandal to the Church from this source, it is by no means certain that by this practice, for a time at least, its influence over the rude kings of the Franks was lessened. After a time the two systems, that of the Church and of the State, mutually supported each other, and nothing of general interest was undertaken without the aid of each. We begin to see the direct influence of the Church upon the system of these rude Franks when we find the Pope calling on Charles Martel for aid against the schismatic Lombards; when we find Pepin begging the Pope to make him by divine authority a king *de jure*, as he already was one *de facto*, and when, on that famous Christmas day in the year 800, Charlemagne was crowned, at Rome, Emperor of the restored Western Empire, in token that a new world-monarchy had been formed, of which the King of the Franks was to be *Cæsar Imperator Semper Augustus*, and the Pope *Pontifex Maximus*.

The next step in the advance of the Frankish power, thus made up of the elements of civil and ecclesiastical authority firmly welded together, was logically, if not quite chronologically, the conversion of the Northern nations. The Frankish kings had established the Church on a firm basis within their own dominions. It was now the turn of the Church to lead the way, or at least to march to the spiritual conquest of Germany in company with the armies which sought to annex its territory to the dominion of the Merovingians. In

expeditions where both motives operated so powerfully, it is not easy now to test their comparative force. That the Church was sincere in its desire for the conversion of these heathen, and that from the highest motives, we may infer from the character of the missionaries she sent among them, and from that natural desire to propagate what she believed to be the truth, which was conspicuous even in her most degenerate days. But, with that wisdom and sagacity in applying means appropriate to gain her ends at a particular time which have always characterized her, she saw clearly that her object was not to be accomplished by moral force alone. As St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany and martyr of the faith, avows, "Without the authority of the King of the Franks, and without the respect which that authority inspired, nothing could have been done either to teach the people, or to protect the priests and monks who were engaged in this hazardous service, or to break up the pagan superstitions or the worship of idols."

In this way the Church became the natural and necessary ally of the Franks in the conquest of Germany, and, while she must bear her share of the responsibility for the horrible cruelties attendant upon it, and especially for the wholesale conversions that were made when the alternative was extermination or baptism, still we may find some excuse, not merely in the permanent good results which followed the destruction of the heathen religions, but also in the reflection that, in the opinion then prevalent, conquest and Christianity stood

in relation to each other as cause and effect. There is something revolting to us in the notion of men being made Christians by the power of the sword, but circumstances forbade either statesmen or churchmen to entertain such opinions in the sixth and seventh centuries. For it was not only the spread of Christianity which was involved in these wars of Charlemagne and his predecessors with the fierce tribes of Germany, but the future of Western Europe as well. The heathen surrounded the Empire of the Franks, scarcely permanently settled in Gaul, as the Franks had threatened the Roman, and a new and fiercer invasion was feared unless its power was broken in its native strongholds.

It is refreshing to turn from these doubtful methods of propagating Christianity to the evangelic labors of those true defenders of the faith, whose record of devotion, self-sacrifice, and successful endeavor to plant a permanent civilization in the wilds of Germany forms one of the brightest chapters in history. We must understand that the inhabitants of certain portions of Germany, such as Frisia on the north, Saxony and Thuringia in the middle, and Bavaria and a part of the country of the Alemanni on the south, had little to do with the invasion of the Empire. They had remained untamed heathen and German, with little or no infusion of the Roman element. Towards these countries the zeal of the early missionaries was directed. St. Columban, an Irish monk, established himself, with twelve of his countrymen, in the midst of the heathen in



589, near the Vosges Mountains, and spread the Christian doctrine, with wonderful success, among the population of what is now Alsace, Baden, and Switzerland, and his disciple, St. Gall, established among the Grisons one of the most famous monasteries of the Middle Age. From these points rays of light reached Southwest Germany, the missionary stations being advanced far into Bavaria. The work was not at first as thoroughly done as it would have been had it been better organized. It needed unity of plan, and, above all, some one controlling and directing authority. This was found when the Pope became the acknowledged head of the Western Church. We all remember the story of the English boys found by Pope Gregory the Great in the slave-market at Rome, and how this incident is supposed to have induced him to send Augustine and his monks to convert the heathen Anglo-Saxons, then occupying the south of England. This enterprise proved so successful that it led him to take similar methods to assure the triumph of the Church in Germany. His agents for this holy purpose were converted Anglo-Saxons, and Frisia, the country which stretches along the North Sea from the Elbe to the Weser, then perhaps the rudest of all the German districts, was the scene of their first labors. Here little success at first attended them, for a reason which prevailed apparently nowhere else in Germany, and that was that Frankish conquest and Christianity were both presented to them at the same time, and both were equally regarded as the badge of slavery. But the

heroism of Willibrod and Winfred, who were persistent in their efforts, and the martyrdom of the last, whose name had been changed by the Pope to Boniface, at last completed the triumph of Christianity in these remote regions. Time would fail me to tell of the labors of many others, men of whom the world was not worthy, the true pioneers of civilization among these tribes, of St. Anskar, for instance, the "Apostle of the North," as he was called, to whom the Scandinavian countries were indebted for their first knowledge of Christianity. But a few words must be said about Winfred, St. Boniface, the "Apostle of Germany;" for certainly no man before Charlemagne did as much for the civilization of that country. An Englishman of noble birth, he placed himself under the direction of the Pope as a missionary to the heathen tribes of Central Germany. He was a statesman as well as a sincere zealot, and he allied himself in carrying out his plans closely, as we have seen, with the Merovingian kings, whose wars in Thuringia and Saxony were guided much by his advice. He was as brave as he was politic. He could cut down a sacred oak supposed to be under the protection of the god Donar, the Scandinavian god of thunder, and die a martyr's death, as he did, with the same cheerful courage, for the propagation of the faith. He could live like a hermit in a monastery, and yet, when duty to the Church and obedience to the Pope called him to the spiritual administration of Germany, he could give the divine sanction to the usurpation of Pepin

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of the Merovingian crown. He could rule with almost unchecked power from his Archiepiscopal see of Mentz the whole Church of Germany, and yet, in the midst of it all, seek to renew the arduous labors of the humble missionary and to meet a martyr's death. He established those great centres of civilization of those times,—monasteries and bishops' sees. Such a man is worthily called the "Apostle of Germany," and the work that he did, unlike that of Charlemagne, has never been undone, but, ever fresh and vigorous, bears fruit more and more abundantly.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE FRANKISH CONQUESTS AND CHARLEMAGNE.

THE occupation of Central Europe by the Franks under Clovis and his descendants (known in history as Merovingians) is an important historical fact, because it signifies the permanent transfer of the power which had controlled these regions from the Latin to the German races. The record of the Merovingian rule in Gaul for two hundred and seventy years is a most dreary one, made up of constant struggles among the descendants of Clovis for the chieftainship of the tribe, during which the kingdom of the Franks was divided among them no less than eight times. We look in vain during a larger part of this period for the lasting growth of any one of those ideas upon which our modern civilization rests, and which we had reason to find after the apparent combination of the Teutonic and Roman characteristics which had been begun under the guiding influence of the Christian Church. In Gaul, the fierce warrior chiefs seem to have dragged the Church itself almost into the abyss of barbarism. In Spain and in England, during the same era, the conflict among the different races forming the population ceased, and progress was made not only towards something like unity in the form of government, but also in the abandonment of

those habits of restless wandering for the sake of plunder, which cannot coexist with even the lowest form of civilization. In Gaul, in these respects, the Franks were almost as lawless as when they roamed in the forests of Germany.

It is not necessary to recount these obscure quarrels of the successors of Clovis. What is more important is to know what were the boundaries of their kingdom towards the close of the Merovingian dynasty. I ought perhaps to qualify my statement that we find *none* of the characteristics of the policy of a civilized government among the Franks in the later days of the Merovingians, by saying that they at least never, even in the most disordered times, neglected measures to secure their eastern frontier from invasion by the tribes, more barbarous than they, who bordered upon it. Over the tribes outside their limits—the Frisians, the Saxons, and others—the Franks claimed persistently a supremacy which was maintained both then and in the time of Charlemagne by constant wars, the object being rather to insure the safety of their own lands than to acquire new territory. Towards the close of the Merovingian period, then, the frontier of the kingdom of the Franks on the east and north was the river Rhine, in Germany, and on the south and west the river Garonne, in France,—from Amsterdam to Bordeaux, and from the Mediterranean to the German Ocean.—This territory was divided into four great districts, or kingdoms as they were called: Austrasia, or the eastern kingdom,

from the river Rhine to the Meuse, with Metz as its principal city; Neustria, or the western kingdom, extending from Austrasia to the ocean on the west, and to the Loire on the south; Aquitaine, south of that river to the foot of the Pyrenees; and Burgundy, from the Rhone to the Alps, including Switzerland. These four kingdoms became, before the extinction of the Merovingian race, consolidated into two, viz., Austrasia and Neustria, Eastern and Western Francia,—modern Germany and modern France, roughly speaking,—of which the first was to gain the pre-eminence, as it was the seat of the power of that race of Charlemagne which seized upon the kingdoms of the Merovingians. But in these kingdoms, while the family of Clovis occupied them, the royal power became more and more feeble as time went on, a condition which is illustrated by the title given in history to these kings,—that of *rois fainéants*. The truth seems to be that, owing to the degradation into which the power of the Merovingians had gradually sunk under the strong will of the Mayors of the Palace, there was for these kings *rien à faire*. The military organization of the Franks was kept up with great care. It will be remembered that the military service of the chiefs was paid for by them in grants of land, sometimes hereditary and sometimes not; and that these grantees, usually the companions of the King, under the name of Antrustions, Leudes, etc., became possessed of vast domains and corresponding power. We call these rude barbarian chiefs kings;

but there was nothing characteristic of the modern monarch about them. They may have been larger proprietors of lands than their Antrustions, and a nominal allegiance was due to them. The Franks had almost a superstitious reverence for the rights of their kings, as they were supposed to be of divine lineage; but, practically the aristocratic element, and not the kingly element, was the true basis of the power of government as it existed among them as soon as their wanderings had ceased. Thierry gives us an interesting picture of the domestic life of one of these so-called kings, from which it would appear that he resembled as little a feudal lord with his government organized by a graded hierarchy as he did a modern monarch with the forces which centralization has placed at his disposal. "The Frankish kings," he says, "did not inhabit cities. They moved about from one of their domains to another, remaining in each as long as the provisions which had there been accumulated for themselves and their companions lasted. One of these immense farms where the Frankish kings held their court, and which they much preferred to the finest cities of Roman Gaul, was *Braine*. The royal palace there was not like the castles of the feudal times. The large house was built of wood; and it was surrounded by lodgings for the officers of the palace. There were in the neighborhood other houses, of less imposing appearance, occupied by a large number of persons, brought together by the necessities of the king and his retainers, who were engaged in various

handicrafts,—silversmiths, weavers, tanners, etc. The materials for their work, and their implements, had generally been stolen from the neighboring Gallic town." The houses of the farmers and the huts of the slaves of the domain made up the royal encampment, the general appearance being that of an ancient German village community upon a large scale. It is evident that a chief living in this way would have little chance of resisting a combination of turbulent nobles whose object might be to extend their own power and domains. And so it happened.

The most powerful officer of a Frankish king was his steward, or, as he was called, the mayor of his palace. He was generally his most trusted companion or Antrustion, and of the highest rank and of the largest possessions among the nobles. In each of the four Frankish kingdoms he was the *alter ego* of the king: Austrasia, Eastern Francia,—that is, Germany,—towards the close of the Merovingian dynasty had become greatly superior in power and influence to Neustria. The great nobles in Austrasia profited by the dissensions of the descendants of Clovis to increase their own power, and these mayors of the palace were their leaders in this movement. In Austrasia the office had become hereditary in the family of Pepin of Landen (a small village near Liège), and under its guidance the degenerate children of Clovis in that kingdom fought for the supremacy with those equally degenerate in Neustria, at that time also under the real control of another mayor of



the palace, called Ebroin. The result of this struggle, after much bloodshed and misery, was reached in the year 687 at the battle of Testry, in which the Austrasians completely defeated the Neustrians. The date of the event is important, as marking, practically, not merely the extinction of the first royal race of the Franks,—the Merovingians,—but also the preponderance in the government of Gaul of the German element, as well as the consequent decline of the Roman and Gallic influence north of the Alps, and the rise of that power which in later years, and under Charlemagne, overshadowed all Europe.

We must remember that the Merovingian princes were still nominally kings, while all the real power was in the hands of the descendants of Pepin of Landen, mayors of the palace, and the policy of government was as fully settled by them as if they had been kings *de jure* as well as *de facto*. This family produced in its earlier days some persons who have become among the most conspicuous figures in history:—Pepin, the founder; Pepin le Gros, of Héristal; Charles, his son, commonly called Martel, or the Hammerer; Pepin le Bref, under whom the Carlovingian dynasty was, by aid of the Pope, recognized as the lawful successor of the Merovingians, even before the extinction of that race; and, lastly, Charles, surnamed the Great, or Charlemagne, one of the few men of the human race who, by common consent, have occupied the foremost rank in history. These Carlovingians, or Carolingians, from the beginning claimed

support for their dynasty on the ground that they should be regarded as true sovereigns, because they had done something for the advantage of the people over whom they ruled, in striking contrast, in this respect, with the *do-nothing* policy of their predecessors ; and we can have no better standard for judging their pretensions now. The history of this family claims our special attention and interest, for during its rule, and as a result of its policy, there was a rapid growth of some of the more active elements of our modern life.

The object of Pepin of Héristal was twofold,—to repress the disposition of the turbulent nobles to encroach upon the royal authority, and to bring again under the yoke of the Franks those tribes in Germany who had revolted against the Frankish rule owing to the weakness of the Merovingian government. He measurably accomplished both objects, and a failure in either would undoubtedly have precipitated a new and destructive wave of invasion upon unhappy Gaul. He seems to have had what perhaps is the best test at all times of the claims of a man to be a real statesman : some consciousness of the true nature of his mission,—the establishment of order. With a view of strengthening his position, he revived some of the ancient and cherished customs of the Franks which had been abandoned by his predecessors. He convoked those assemblies of the people, the *Champs de Mars* or *de Mai*, which had been one of the original institutions of the Franks, where, as we have seen, every public measure

was discussed and settled by the nobles before its adoption, but which had become since their occupation of Gaul councils of war only. His son and successor, Charles Martel, was even more conspicuous for the possession of the genius of statesmanship, but he exhibited it in a somewhat different direction. He, too, strove to hold the nobles in check, and to break the power of the Frisian and the Saxon tribes; and he fought besides, fortunately for his fame, one of the fifteen decisive battles in the history of the world, that of Poitiers in 732, by which the Saracens, who had conquered Spain, and who had strong hopes of gaining possession of the whole of Western Europe, were driven back from Northern France, never to return. We can only estimate the importance of such a victory as this by reflecting what would have been the civilization of Europe had the Saracens succeeded in this battle, and had that civilization been drawn from Oriental and Mohammedan sources instead of from those that were Roman and Christian. Charles Martel, therefore, saved Central Europe from the ruin threatening it from the Moslem hordes, while his father, Pepin, had forced back the tide of the barbarian invasion, ready to overwhelm it as it advanced from the East. His son, Pepin le Bref, is equally conspicuous with the rest in history, but in a somewhat different way. He continued the never-ending wars in Germany and in Gaul with the object of securing peace by the sword, and with more or less success. But his career is noteworthy principally because he completed the actual deposition of the last of

the Merovingian race, whose nominal servants but real masters he and his predecessors, mayors of the palace, had been, and because he sought and obtained the sanction of the Church for this usurpation. In the year 751 Pepin thought that the anomalous position of the mayor of the palace, who had all the power and responsibility of the king, but without the title, a state of things which had lasted from the time of the battle of Testry, (687,) should be brought to an end.

It is important to observe here not merely the very natural and proper feeling on his part that he who wields the power should possess the title,—because this had been more or less the practice of the Franks at all times,—but the evident belief which existed in the mind of this great ruler of the necessity of superadding to his own title and the choice of his nation the sanction of the Church. This indicates, it seems to me, a very different kind of recognition of the authority of the Church from that seen in the baptism of Clovis; and it would appear from the anxiety of Pepin to obtain the decision of the Pope in favor of his title to the crown, as well as from his strenuous support of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Frisia and Saxony, that during the confusion and trouble of the later days of the Merovingians, however the civil power under the old system may have crumbled, that of the Church had gone on silently increasing. These rude warriors, barbarous and untamed in everything else, were forced at least to abandon as their king a descendant of Odin and to seek for one who would be

recognized as a true ruler by the God of the Christians. Surely this tenacity of life in the Christian organization while everything around it was falling into ruin is very remarkable. Pepin's system was undoubtedly that of an alliance with the Church; but this, of course, he would not have sought had he not seen in it the means of the advancement of his own power and dynasty. So on the Pope's side the advantage of the alliance was very clear.

Ever since the occupation of the larger portion of Italy by the Lombards, and the rest of the country by the representatives of the Greek Emperor at Constantinople, neither the civil nor the spiritual jurisdiction of the Pope in Italy had been treated with much respect. The Franks were not only the most powerful of all the tribes, but they alone of all the others were Catholic, the rest being Arians. It was natural that the Popes, in their distress caused by the encroachments of the Lombards and the want of protection by the Greeks, should desire to call these redoubtable orthodox warriors to their aid. An appeal for this purpose was made to Charles Martel, who, notwithstanding his services to Christendom by driving back the Saracenic invasion, had fallen under the censure of the Church because he had distributed the bishoprics in the countries he conquered among his own followers without its sanction. He was about to cross the Alps to aid the Pope, when he was overtaken by death. His astute son Pepin saw at once how he could gain advantage by ministering to the Pope's

necessities. No doubt he valued highly the Pope's declaration to him that he who held the royal power might well hold the royal title, and thus the deposition of Childeric, the first consecration of Pepin by St. Boniface by order of the Pope, the journey of Stephen II. across the Alps for the purpose of imploring the aid of the great King of the Franks, the bestowal of the Roman diadem, and the Hebrew anointing of the chief who had been raised upon a buckler and saluted by his trusty companions after the manner of the Franks as their king, became the price paid by the Pope for the alliance with the Franks, and was the beginning of a system, more thoroughly organized under Charlemagne, by which the Pope's supremacy was assured beyond peradventure.

The Pope's position at this time was one of very great embarrassment. Harassed by the Lombards, who were not only robbers, but who were also Arians, and who admitted none of the Catholic clergy to their councils,—with no succor from the Emperors at Constantinople (whose subject he nominally was) against the Lombards, and, indeed, in open revolt against them because as bishop and patriarch of the West he had forbidden the execution of the decree against the placing of images in the churches,—for these and many such reasons he sorely needed succor, and naturally in his necessity he turned to the powerful King of the Franks. The coronation of Pepin le Bref, first by St. Boniface, and then by the Pope himself, was the first step in the fulfilment

of the alliance on his part. Pepin was soon called upon to do his share of the work. Twice at the bidding of the Pope he descended from the Alps, and, defeating the Lombards, was rewarded by him and the people of Rome with the title of Patrician. This title, which had been considered in the latter days of the Empire little inferior in dignity to that of Emperor or Consul, had sunk with other things in the general decline so low that it seems to have meant in the time of Pepin little more than that of the defender or protector of the city of Rome, where the ancient municipal spirit and power were not wholly extinct.

This succor of Pepin was the first substantial material aid given by the Frankish monarchs to the Popes. But more was to follow. On the death of Pepin, the Lombards again took up arms and harassed the Church's territory. Charlemagne, his successor, was called upon to come to the rescue, and he swept the Lombard power in Italy out of existence, annexing its territory to the Frankish kingdom, and confirming the grant of the Exarchate and of the Pentapolis to the Popes which his father had made. This was in the year 774. Such was the first act in that mighty drama, the outcome of which was to be that alliance of Church and State in Western Europe which was to color all subsequent history. For twenty-five years Charlemagne ruled Rome nominally as Patrician, under the supremacy, equally nominal, of the Emperor at Constantinople. The true sovereign, recognized as such, was the Pope or Bishop

of Rome, but the actual power was in the hands of the mob, who at one time towards the close of the century, in the absence of both Emperor and Patrician, assaulted the Pope while conducting a procession, and forced him to abandon the city. This Pope, Leo, with a fine instinct as to the quarter from which succor could alone come, hurried to seek Charlemagne, who was then in Germany engaged in one of his never-ending wars against the Saxons. The appeal for aid was not made in vain, and Charles descended once more from the Alps in the summer of 799, with his Frankish hosts. On Christmas day, A.D. 800, in the Church of St. Peter (not the modern temple, due to the genius of Michael Angelo, but one then more truly recalling Rome's proudest days, in the form of the ancient Greek basilica or court-house), Pope Leo, during the mass, and after the reading of the gospel, placed upon the brow of Charlemagne, who had abandoned his Northern furs for the dress of a Roman patrician, the diadem of the Cæsars, and hailed him *Imperator Semper Augustus*, while the multitude shouted, "*Carolo Augusto a Deo coronato magno et pacifico Imperatori Vita et Victoria.*" In that shout and from that moment one of the most fruitful epochs of history begins. We shall trace its ever-present influence along the whole course of the history which we are to follow.\*

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\* I am indebted to Prof. Bryce's admirable work, "The Holy Roman Empire," for this account of the coronation of Charlemagne and its significance in mediæval history.



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Perhaps there never was a grander and more comprehensive scheme of government propounded by statesmen for the ruling of the world, and one which, on the whole, responded so fully to the design of its founders. It had its basis in the profound convictions of the greatest thinkers of the mediæval time that there were two principles, and two only, upon which the rightful government of mankind could be settled,—law and religion; and they believed they had found the only true exponents of these principles in the Roman law and the Christian Church. The belief in the first was not a mere attachment to a tradition of Roman greatness, any more than faith in the other depended upon their ardent desire for the universal rule of the Church in the future. But it was rather that this combination formed their highest ideal of human life and human society. To them law and religion were the pillars upon which all true life is built, and they formed the only cohesive power of human society when force, which is the negation of law as it is of reason, is discarded. In Imperial Rome the functions of the head of the law and the head of religion had been inseparably united in one person. The Emperor was always both *Imperator Semper Augustus* and *Pontifex Maximus*. But when Leo and Charlemagne designed, as they said, to revive the Western Roman Empire, three hundred and twenty-four years after the last Cæsar of the West had left to his Eastern brother at Constantinople the sole headship of the world, it was impossible so to restore that

organization that the unity of law and religion should be represented by the same person. The principle, however, of absolute unity was maintained, although the world-monarchy and the world-religion were hereafter to be governed by two different persons, the one called the Emperor and the other the Pope. They were to be in the closest possible relations, supporting each other mutually in all their designs. According to this theory, the Emperor could not lawfully exist unless crowned by the Pope, any more than the Pope could become such without the consent of the Emperor. He was to be the champion, advocate, and defender of the Church, and his business was to extend its limits, to protect it in its privileges, and to support it in the exercise of its powers. The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire, according to the mediæval theory, were the same thing in two aspects: as divine and eternal the Pope was the head of the Church, as human and temporal the Emperor was commissioned to rule men's bodies and acts so as to conform them to the divine law as established by the Church. Of course, vulgar motives of aggrandizement, and even prudential motives of safety, both on the part of the Pope and the Emperor, had their place when this extraordinary scheme for the government of Europe was instituted. And yet undoubtedly a love of law and order and peace, founded on religion, as essential to the prosperity and safety of the race, was the governing motive of those who knew by personal experience, when they advocated the revival

of this Roman system of law, what anarchy was. That system, with all its faults, had at any rate assured peace and reasonable safety to the human race for a longer time than any other. The theory on which the scheme was based seems to us rather like the dreams of Plato than the work of the Churchmen and rude barbarians of a most calamitous period in history. If the Holy Roman Empire was not destined to check fully, as it was designed, the flood of barbarism which constantly poured over Europe, it is none the less true that the scheme of a universal monarchy and a universal religion is one of the most persistent in history. We shall meet it again and again, not merely in the mediæval era, but in modern times, and we shall find that there is scarcely any event from which more momentous consequences have flowed than the coronation of Charlemagne by the Pope.

In treating of the causes of that great historical event, the alliance of the family of Charlemagne with the Pope and the Church, in their logical order, I have anticipated much of the history of the life of Charlemagne which made that alliance so fruitful of results. Charlemagne became the Emperor of the new Holy Roman Empire not merely because he was orthodox and because it was essential to his own interests that he should maintain the orthodox faith with its fullest organization in his dominions, but also because, in the year 800, he ruled over a larger portion of the territory of Europe than any Roman Emperor had ever done. His

dominion extended from the river Elbe to the river Ebro, in Spain, and from the southern point of Italy to the German Ocean. It would be wearisome to give a detailed account of the wars by which the territory which did not come to him from his father was acquired. He conquered during his reign of forty-four years (769–813) not merely the stubborn tribes in Germany, the Frisians, the Saxons, the Thuringians, and the Bavarians, who had so long threatened with invasion the Frankish dominions (and it required thirty-three successive campaigns to accomplish this object), but also the Slavonians beyond the Elbe, the Avars in Hungary, the Lombards in Italy, and the Saracens in Spain. In all, he made fifty-three warlike expeditions; and yet, strange to say, he appears to his modern admirers not as a mere conqueror for ambition's sake, as Hannibal and Alexander the Great in the ancient world, and Frederick the Great and Napoleon in the modern, but as guided on the whole by a truly defensive policy, his real object being in his rude way to restore permanently that peace and order of which the world stood so much in need, and by which it was the fond dream of the time it had once been governed. He knew but one way to bring about this result: first, by seeking these wild tribes in their own forests in Germany, and crippling there their power of invading and plundering his dominions, and, secondly, by converting them to Christianity; and the sword was regarded as an equally efficient weapon in both cases. The wars in which Charlemagne was engaged seem to

have been, as I have said, carried on as national acts, and not merely from a desire to gratify personal ambition. It seems strange to us to find Charlemagne propagating Christianity by giving the German tribes the alternative of belief or death by drowning, and yet even we may understand that it was a statesman-like way of protecting his own frontiers from invasion. To achieve what he did, he must have possessed almost superhuman activity and inflexible perseverance. It is said that a truly great man is one who has the loftiest conceptions of policy with the most painstaking attention to details in carrying it out. This loftiness of the ideal and the attention to details must exist in *combination* to produce the proper result. Such a peculiarity was eminently characteristic of Charlemagne, as it was of Julius Cæsar before, and of Napoleon (who always claimed the power and prerogatives of Charlemagne) after him.

There are other resemblances between Napoleon and Charlemagne which are very striking, and some account of them may help us to understand better the great Emperor. They both, for instance, made war support itself; that is, they took the resources of the conquered countries to feed their armies. Charlemagne never paid his troops, nor provided for their needs; war was their business, their passion, and their means of living. So, in their campaigns, each of these conquerors strove to rouse the feeling of the population of the countries they invaded against their rulers, so that they might gain their

ends by keeping alive such enmities. Divide and conquer, was their motto. In urging the Poles and Italians to aid him in his wars in their countries, Napoleon was only strictly following the example of Charlemagne, who appealed to the down-trodden old races of Italy and Spain to rise against the Lombards and the Saracens. The parallel between these mighty men might be extended to other things, both to those in which they failed and to those in which they succeeded. It certainly is not to be wondered at that a man who was the master of the larger portion of the territory of Europe, and who had conquered it from the motives and by the policy which we have described, should desire to consolidate this rule in such a way as to mould the destiny of Europe for all time by that policy, and that he should have regarded the Roman Imperial system, modified by the papacy, as the best means of accomplishing his purpose. Certainly nothing is greater about Charlemagne or his age than this grand scheme of securing peace with order to the troubled world. If there was any hope at that time for the world, discoverable by the most penetrating foresight or the most ardent philanthropy, it lay in the revival of the Roman Empire.

What means did Charlemagne adopt for ruling his vast possessions? and upon what grounds does his fame as a great legislator and administrator rest? We must remember always that he ruled in a double capacity, not merely as King of the Franks, but also, at least after the year 800, as head of the Holy Roman Empire. Much

of the machinery of his legislation can only be properly understood by keeping in mind its double purpose. It is not easy to draw the line and say where his work as King of the Franks ended and that as Emperor began. The three great interests which he guarded especially seem to have been those of race, territory, and religion. To insure the stability of his policy in the Frankish kingdom was, no doubt, the chief end of the super-human activity he displayed. But his work in striving to introduce among the wild savages east of the Elbe the beginnings at least of an orderly government and some notions of Christianity, the substitution of his own rule for that of the Lombards and the Greeks in Italy, his maintenance of the frontier in Spain against the assaults of the Saracens, and, above all, his hearty co-operation with the Church in its efforts to follow up his conquests by extending its influence,—all these things, perhaps, fall strictly within what he considered as the proper sphere of his functions as Roman Emperor. But his work as the German King was quite as remarkable, as is proved by the complicated machinery of his legislation. His capital and principal residence was at Aix-la-Chapelle, near Cologne. We must disabuse our minds of the idea that Charlemagne, because his people were called Franks, was in any sense, or rather in the modern sense, French. He had nothing to do with the French, except as their conqueror. He was a German of the Germans. He was, moreover, in his own estimation, the world-monarch, from whom all earthly power was

derived. His local government—that is, in his German domains—was administered by officers called, indifferently, dukes, counts, vicars, scabini (echevins); and their business was, in thorough subordination to the master, to raise troops, to dispense justice, to maintain order, to gather the tribute, each within an allotted district. Besides these, there were certain beneficiaries to whom lands had been granted in various portions of the territory with the stipulation that they should aid the king in his government and his wars, and who, unlike the feudal lords, as most of their descendants became in due time, were not only legally but actually under the absolute control of the king. The marks or frontiers of the kingdom were governed by counts specially appointed.

To these officers was added another class with peculiar functions. They were called *missi dominici*, or inspectors, appointed by the king, whose business it was to travel into the different portions of his empire with authority to ascertain whether his orders had been observed, and generally to correct abuses in the administration. There were also national assemblies held every year after the manner of the ancient Franks, called *Champs de Mars*, or later *de Mai*. These were generally held at some central point in the kingdom, near the Rhine, and were attended by the freemen, who deliberated in two bodies, one composed of the higher nobility and clergy, and the other of those of lower rank. Exactly how far these assemblies controlled the legislation



of the kingdom is uncertain. It would appear that they were regarded by Charlemagne merely as an advisory body, from whom, especially, information was to be gained by which his own action was to be guided. In the legislation of that time, as in its wars, however, Charlemagne is always the central figure. That legislation is known to us as preserved in the Capitularies of Charlemagne, the word *capitula* being applied to the laws, decrees, or edicts, which were issued under his authority. During his reign of forty-four years no less than eleven hundred and twenty-six such *capitula* or distinct laws—six hundred and twenty-one relating to civil and four hundred and fifteen to religious legislation, and nearly one hundred to other subjects of public interest—were issued, more or less founded on the advice and consent of the representatives of the nation in their yearly assemblies. These *capitula* form a living picture of the society, civil, military, ecclesiastical, and moral, which gave them birth. It is impossible here to give any detailed or satisfactory account (and no account would be satisfactory unless it were in detail) of the spirit of this legislation. Many of these capitularies have been preserved, and I must refer those who desire more particularly to examine their character to M. Guizot's third volume of his History of Civilization in France. The impression made by such an examination must be, I think, that, considering the circumstances of the time, both before and after this era, the capacity for such enlightened legislation as is found

in these capitularies, relating both to the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the Empire, is little less than marvellous. Certainly they show that Charlemagne was not only one of the greatest conquerors but also one of the greatest law-givers the world has ever known. It may be interesting to remember that Napoleon, in this respect, resembled his great prototype, for he is said to have been prouder of his share in preparing the French civil code than of all his victories.

Charlemagne's title to greatness—a title inseparably affixed by his contemporaries and by posterity to his very name—does not rest merely upon his having been a great warrior and a great statesman, but also upon his having been the most powerful advocate of the promotion of human learning the world has ever known. We hear it said that Charlemagne could not write his own name; yet he composed Latin verses well, and the epitaph (in Latin) upon his friend Pope Adrian is one of the best of its kind so far as the Latinity is concerned. It is commonly said, too, that Charlemagne founded the university system of modern Europe; however that may be, it is certain that he established the schools attached to his own palace and to the cathedrals and monasteries, from which the modern university sprang. His friends and companions were among the most learned and enlightened men of the time, and their affectionate remembrance has preserved for us a more living and real portrait of this wonderful man than we have of any one else who lived

a thousand years ago. His principal agent in his plans for the encouragement of learning, his intellectual prime minister, so to speak, was Alcuin, an Englishman, bred in the cathedral school in York, and for long years a celebrated teacher there. It is to be remembered that in those days of the decay of the old civilization on the continent, caused by wars and invasions, Ireland, Scotland, and the North of England seem to have been the only places of refuge in Europe for learned men. All the more distinguished early missionaries came, as is known, from these islands, principally from the monastic schools of Ireland and Scotland, and Alcuin, who was a scholar of the very highest order, was induced by Charlemagne to enter his service as early as 769.

We may, I suppose, look upon the work of this great man at the court of Charlemagne as showing what was considered the highest form of human learning at that era, as well as the class of persons to whom it was taught. It seems that Alcuin established his school in the Emperor's palace, by his request, where he gave instruction in grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, poetry, astronomy, natural history, mathematics, and the explanation of the Holy Scriptures; and that among his scholars were not only the Emperor himself, but his children also, —boys and girls,—some of his privy councillors, and at least two bishops. Besides this, he corrected and restored the text of ancient manuscripts, which had been much defaced by ignorant transcribers. He gave particular attention to the revision of the text of the

Holy Scriptures, a revision adopted by Charlemagne and ordered by him to be made the standard text throughout his dominions. It is difficult to say whether Charlemagne delighted most in warlike deeds or in his intercourse with learned men, in restoring manuscripts, and thus providing proper materials for study, in re-establishing schools, which had everywhere gone to decay, or in converting the heathen Saxons.

There is a Charlemagne of history, a Charlemagne of legendary and popular fame, above all a Charlemagne of poetry, the type of the perfect Christian knight who, with the famous Roland and his twelve Paladins, fought against the Moslem in Roncesvalles. Throughout the Middle Age we hear constantly

“ the blast of that wild horn,  
On Fontarabian echoes borne,  
The dying hero's call,  
That told imperial Charlemagne  
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain  
Had wrought his champion's fall.”

He was thus the ideal hero of his age, and he was looked upon during the Middle Age as the great restorer of whatever was true and valuable in Roman civilization. Even in this critical day his figure seems to those who carefully consider it as so imposing that no man, perhaps, who ever lived has been regarded by so many historians, ever since his time, as exhibiting the highest type of greatness in so many different departments of human activity. He shines out, too, perhaps, all the

more brilliantly as he was the one bright star of a very dark night. Both theologians and the writers of history, whether they consider modern European society founded upon an aristocratic or a popular basis, regard him as the incarnation of wisdom and of equity. Montesquieu says of him, "He was great as a prince, but still greater as a man. No one who ever lived better understood the art of doing great things with ease, or difficult things with promptitude." Says another writer, "Charlemagne was a civilizing hero like Alexander the Great. Alexander made the East Greek, and Charlemagne the West Latin. They both worked for future ages, and the fire they lighted will never be extinguished."

But, brilliant as was the civilization which this great man tried to establish in Europe, and profound as has been the recognition of his merits by posterity, we must not forget that there is another side of the picture, which we should study if we desire to gain an accurate idea of the practical value of the work of Charlemagne. We must see not only what he did, but also what he did not, or, rather, how far success attended his world-embracing schemes. In the first place, then, his central or Imperial system failed. It scarcely lasted longer than his own life. There were many reasons now very apparent for this, but it must suffice to name one which, in fact, includes them all, and that is, that the Teutonic tribes were wholly unfitted for a system of administration which had, even among the comparatively civilized

Romans, ended by eating out, like a cancer, the sources of their national life.

In his attempt to introduce such a system among rude tribes just emerged from barbarism, Charlemagne entered into a conflict with the nature of man itself. He was not satisfied to bring his own hereditary dominions under the rule of peace and order, but he exhibited, in a marked degree, that characteristic which has been dominant in all the great rulers of mankind, whether they be called Alexander, Mohammed, or Napoleon,—viz., a *rage for uniformity*, which has been always inseparable from their ideal conception of public order and good government. All such attempts have failed, and, from the very nature of man, must fail. Ideal reconstructions of society on such a basis have never succeeded. Hence, when his mighty hand was removed, the central authority, the national assemblies, the *missi dominici*, all the complicated machinery of the Imperial system, having no other support, fell also, while the dukes, the counts, the vicars, the centenniers, remained, with totally different functions, under the decentralized rule which followed.

But, it will be asked, did Charlemagne do nothing which remained for posterity and which was productive of permanent results in the history of Europe? Not to repeat here what I have already insisted upon at length,—that he finally rescued Europe from barbarism and helped forward the fusion of the Teutonic type of civilization with that of the Roman,—his Empire, broken

into separate states shortly after his death, was resolved into a multitude of local sovereignties. Yet even in these, far on in the Middle Age, while his policy of centralization was abandoned as impossible, the civilizing influences of his rule and his example were never forgotten. Before his time, the frontiers of Germany, Spain, and Italy were constantly fluctuating, in itself a symptom of the restlessness of barbarism, while after his reign states more or less organized, and with frontiers more or less recognized, such as the kingdoms of Lorraine, of Germany, of Italy, and the two Burgundies, fulfilled the conditions of communities measurably well governed and civilized.

Charlemagne is more especially the founder of modern Germany. His influence, not only as the King of the Franks, but as Roman Emperor, is the source of much that is characteristic in the history of that country; and as we go on with our studies in that history we shall find that the influence and example of a truly great man are among the few things which never die.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MOHAMMED AND HIS SYSTEM IN THE MIDDLE AGE.

No view of mediæval history can be satisfactory which does not embrace a sketch, at least, of the life and doctrines of Mohammed and of the rapid and extensive conquests of his successors. The great social forces are mainly dependent, as history shows us, upon peculiarities of race and religion. The history of the mediæval age, as has been explained, is essentially one of the conflict of different races and of opposite religious ideas and systems. It seems at first a strange paradox to assert that modern history and modern civilization grew out of this very conflict. The result of the struggle was not the exhaustion, as so often happens, of the opposing forces, nor even the presence of different races on the same territory, each maintaining a distinct and separate life, with a mutual toleration of different religious beliefs, but rather an assimilation, gradual, but complete. We have studied the nature of this process in Central Europe after the fall of the Western Empire in 476,—the fusion, as we have called it, of the Roman with the barbarian, of the Christian with the heathen; and from this fusion we have endeavored to deduce the characteristic features of the typical modern European, and to recognize in this slow process the true source of all modern history.



But, while our inquiries have led us hitherto to observe almost exclusively the successive steps in this work of assimilation and fusion in Europe, we have now reached a period where a conflict of races and creeds produced a totally opposite result. In our study of the history of the Saracens we shall find these same elements of conflict, race and religion, but always repelling, never attracting each other. The Semitic and the Aryan, the Christian and the Moslem, have been from the beginning, as they are now, irreconcilable enemies. Our study of the conquests of the Saracens, unlike that of the conquests of the Northern barbarians, will not show us, as in Central Europe, Christianity strengthened and purified and the true principles of civilization consolidated by the struggle for mastery, but rather Christendom despoiled by violence of lands around the basin of the Mediterranean, where the gospel was first planted. There it achieved its earliest and most signal triumphs, and in the eastern portion of that region Greek and Roman civilization have long been replaced by some of the most characteristic forms of Oriental despotism.

The Saracenic invasions of Christendom differed from those of other formidable non-Christian people—such as those of the Huns and Mongols, for instance—in this, that the Saracens settled down and remained permanently for ages in the conquered lands and established in them their peculiar civilization and religion. So far as I know, they have never lost that sort of control given by their religion and their special Orientalism in any

country they ever conquered, save Spain; and it required eight hundred years to drive them out of that land, Catholic *par excellence*. Conquests in history like those of Alexander, or of Charlemagne, or of Napoleon, or even of Rome itself, are usually so exhausting to the conquering nation that the rule they establish soon falls to pieces after the mighty hand of the conqueror has been removed. But the successors of Mohammed conquered a larger territory in fourscore years than Rome did in four hundred, and utterly supplanted and effaced, wherever they went, that form of civilization founded upon Christianity and Roman law. Their race and their religion always proved insurmountable barriers to any fusion with the Christian people of the lands they subdued. The long duration and the extensive sway of the Moslems are, therefore, among the marvels of history.

There is no romance equal in interest to the simple story of the early Saracenic conquests, for nowhere do the results seem so out of all proportion with the means used to achieve them, and those results changed permanently the face of the whole world. "Within the lifetime of many an aged Arab," says Irving, "the Saracens extended their empire and their faith over the wide regions of Asia and Africa, subverting the empire of Chosroes, King of Persia, subjugating great territories in India, establishing a splendid seat of power in Syria, dictating to the conquered kingdom of the Pharaohs, overrunning the whole northern coast of Africa, scouring

the Mediterranean with their ships, carrying their conquests in one direction to the very walls of Constantinople, and in another to the extreme limits of Mauritania, the modern Morocco and the ancient country of Jugurtha and Micipsa,—in a word, trampling down all the old dynasties which once held haughty and magnificent sway in the East.” And this was the beginning only of their career. In a few years afterwards they had conquered all Spain, save the northern mountainous districts, and had overrun that portion of modern France south of the Loire and west of the Rhone. Their ambition and their religious enthusiasm were not satisfied even by these extensive conquests. They aspired to rule the whole of Western Europe, and to proclaim the religion of the Prophet from the sacred tomb of St. Peter at Rome itself; and we may speculate with curious interest upon what would have been the fate of Europe had not their career of conquest in that portion of the world been stopped and their invasion driven back by the illustrious Charles Martel and his Franks at the great battle of Poitiers, in 732. And even now, when the relative power of Christendom and Islam has so greatly changed, and Mohammedan rule has long been identified with everything which we regard as weak and evil and debasing in government, nothing is more surprising and inexplicable than the tenacity of life which is shown by the principal Mohammedan nation, Turkey, although the race which rules there is not Semitic, but Turanian in its origin, and although its progenitors were

among the later and least willing of the converts to the Moslem faith.

Certainly, if there are any questions in history worth considering, they are such as these. What can have been the causes of these extraordinary results? Who, then, was Mohammed? What was his system of religion and government? Under what circumstances did such a system take root in Arabia? and what were the causes which made his disciples the leaders of a successful armed propagandism? What, in short, was Arabia, the country of the Prophet, at the time of Mohammed's appearance? Geographically, it forms a triangular peninsula, of which the base, nearly a thousand miles long, rests on the Indian Ocean, its apex reaching the confines of Syria. Of its two sides, the eastern is bounded by the Persian Gulf, and the western by the Red Sea. Its inhabitants have always been isolated from the rest of the world. It contained nothing to excite the cupidity of robber tribes, and its territory did not form a pathway to lands where the prey was more tempting. A large portion of the country was a stony desert, uninhabited except by wild, wandering tribes; and even that district in the south, called by the ancients *Arabia Felix*, was poor in resources compared with Persia and Syria upon its borders, or indeed with the other Eastern lands that were afterwards subjugated by the Saracens. The Arabs claim to have been descended from the outcast Ishmael; and, however that may be, their country appears in the remotest history as a land

of refuge to those of the surrounding countries who had been driven from their own by cruelty, persecution, or war. At the time of Mohammed a large number of refugees and their descendants, of various nationalities, were found there, each retaining in a certain measure its ancient manners, and especially its religious belief and ceremonies. Thus, to say nothing of others, there were at Mohammed's appearance large settlements of Jews, at Medina, of Persians, who were disciples of Zoroaster, Magians, or fire-worshippers, and of Christians who had been driven from Syria and perhaps from Egypt as heretics.

The government of the Arab tribes was in the main patriarchal; but families who had long been rich, and whose members held important positions in the public service, were regarded as entitled to high consideration. The principal business of those tribes who were not shepherds was that of commerce, for which purpose (as commerce was carried on in those ages) the position of the peninsula of Arabia presented some peculiar advantages. Their country was the best highway for the trade which has immemorially existed between the East and the West. Ships laden with spices, precious stones, and other coveted luxuries from Africa, India, and the farther East came to Aden, on the Red Sea, whence their cargoes were carried by the Arabs on camels across the desert to the cities of Mesopotamia, or to Damascus, where they were exchanged for the grain of Syria or the silks woven in that country, which in turn were

brought back across the desert and shipped to India. This trade had been carried on for ages before the time of Mohammed,—perhaps even in the time of Solomon. Its route through the Arabian desert, as I have said, was the great highway between the East and the West; and the business seems to have enriched all concerned in conducting it. The merchants in those days and in this region were evidently the most important inhabitants; and I know no more curious illustration of this fact than that the future Prophet of Islam should first appear in history as a travelling salesman, a sort of agent for Cadijah, the woman whom he afterwards married, who had intrusted him with certain of her goods to be conveyed by caravan to Damascus and there to be sold on her account. We must not fail to remark here a more important result of this constant intercourse between Arabia and Persia and Syria, as affecting the mind of Mohammed, as well as those of his countrymen engaged in this trade; and that was the education they received by the acquaintance thus formed with foreign countries, and especially with foreign religions.

When we come to consider the religious ideas prevailing among the Arabs at the time of the advent of Mohammed, it is not possible to regard them as forming a uniform, national, and recognized creed. It has been said that the original Arabians, like all the Semitic tribes, were monotheists; that they from the beginning had entertained that opinion concerning the infinite distance existing between the power of the Creator and the

nothingness of the creature,—absolute power on the one side and absolute submission on the other,—which forms the basis of Mohammed's doctrine. It is said, indeed, that Mohammed is only entitled to credit for having, by his teaching, revived the primal faith of his race. However that may be, it is certain, from causes which it would take too much time to discuss here, that Arabia (if such a collection of tribes can be called a nation) at the time of Mohammed's birth was a nation of idolaters. Their form of idolatry was a very curious one. They had in the city of Mecca, which all the tribes agreed in recognizing as the Holy City, a temple called the Caaba, which they looked upon as sacred, as the seat of their national worship. Within this Caaba or temple, with a hospitality and toleration of which I know no parallel in the history of religious forms of worship, except perhaps in that of the Pantheon at Rome, each tribe performed its own domestic and peculiar rites of worship in its own way, each of them being under the special protection of a different idol, the image either of a man or an eagle or a lion, until the whole number of these idols amounted to three hundred and sixty. This worship, in all the tribes, was accompanied, on solemn occasions, by human sacrifices. This extraordinary diversity of belief and practice in religious worship among the people is very noticeable, for, when they became Mussulmans, with the abolition of idolatry they became absolutely fanatical in their monotheistic belief, and they never changed their horror of anything

approaching idolatry. This is only one indication, among many, of the great revolution in religious ideas wrought by Mohammed. With the forms of idolatry these tribes had all the vices which have invariably accompanied its practice in the East. When we hear the sensual paradise, the material hell, and the blind fatalism taught to his followers by the Prophet spoken of with horror, we must never forget the depth of degradation and superstition from which he succeeded in raising not merely his own countrymen, but vast numbers in other lands, with whose religious systems his own may be said to be, in contrast, purity itself. Besides the national form of worship, those of the Magians, the Jews, and the Christians were permitted. Our business now, however, is rather with the extraordinary power of propagandism which was developed by Mohammedanism, than with the interesting question of the nature of the religious beliefs which previously existed in the country of its birth. How such a system as that of Mohammed could in so short a time become the triumphant creed it did, not merely in Arabia, but throughout Asia, overturning the ascendancy of the long-established systems of Christianity, Magianism, Brahmanism, and Judaism throughout the East, can only be fully accounted for by taking into consideration the condition, political, social, and religious, of Arabia, and of the countries which were first invaded by the Saracens.

In the year 630, which was the date of their first assault on the Roman, or, to speak more intelligibly, the



Byzantine, power in Syria, the Roman Empire was in name and theory, at least, the same universal Empire it had been in the days of Augustus and Trajan. Practically and in fact, however, the power of the Emperor at Constantinople was only really obeyed in the eastern portion of the Empire, composed of the provinces of Egypt and Syria and of that portion of Asia west of the Euphrates, all, at that time, most rich, populous, and fertile districts. The government of the West imposed a great burden and added nothing to the strength or resources of the Imperial government at Constantinople. In Spain, the Gothic monarchs had taken advantage of the weakness of the Byzantine government to annex to their kingdom those portions of that country bordering on the Mediterranean which still recognized the government of the Eastern Emperor. In Gaul, the dynasty of Clovis, under Roman authority *de jure* and Frankish authority *de facto*, maintained its independent position. Northern Europe was still chiefly Pagan, the first step towards its conversion to the obedience of the Roman Church having been taken by sending Augustine and his monks to England about fifteen years before the first preaching of Mohammed. In Italy, the Exarch of Ravenna (representing the Imperial authority at Constantinople) and the Lombards divided the dominion of the country. The real Roman power existed only in the East: Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria were its strongest supporters, and the resources of these provinces were employed, about the time of the coming of Mohammed,

in defending, under Heraclius, what was left of the Roman authority in that quarter against the Persians.

These provinces, especially Syria and Egypt, were not only the most fertile in resources yet left to the Empire, but their population was the most restless and most discontented of any with the policy pursued by the central government at Constantinople, especially with reference to the great question of the time in the East,—the religious question. The dominant party in both these provinces, which included the lands in which Christianity had been earliest planted, were in the eyes of the authorities at Constantinople heretics,—that is to say, they dissented from the declarations of the creed of Nicæa in regard to the Trinity. This creed was considered by the Emperor and by his clergy as the foundation of the true faith, and it was ordered to be observed by all his subjects as such. These provinces, as we need not say, were among the most ancient seats of the highest civilization in the world. Six hundred years before Christ they had formed part of that great Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great and his successors, which had scattered broadcast the seeds of Greek culture, the growth of which changed the whole current of Oriental ideas and history. In the palmiest days of the Empire they were its most flourishing provinces. In them were to be found some of the most famous cities of antiquity: Alexandria, the entrepôt of the world's commerce, the seat for so many ages of the Greek philosophy, and the home of so many Hellenized

Jews and of Christian heretical sects; Antioch, the rich and proud capital of Syria on the coast, where the "disciples were first called Christians;" Jerusalem, the holy; Damascus, the beautiful; Ephesus, the city of Diana; to say nothing of many less noted cities, the long-settled centres of wealth and luxury, outgrowths for the most part of Greek colonization, forming a district whose population was more highly cultured in the Greek sense than any other on the earth's surface. These cities early embraced Christianity; but with them it was not, as among the sober and practical people of the West of Europe, adopted simply as a rule of life, but rather, with that disputatious temper so characteristic of the Greeks, and still more so of Hellenized Orientals, it became a pretext for perpetual abstract metaphysical speculation.

These cultured people were among the most zealous professors of Christianity and the worst illustrations of its practical lessons. With that free temper which was characteristic of minds trained in the Greek schools of thought, they eagerly discussed all its peculiarities, and soon moulded it into forms adapted to Greek philosophical systems, regardless of the charge of heresy constantly made by the orthodox at Rome and at Constantinople. With the nice shades of distinction in regard to the nature of Christ, and other speculative opinions concerning Christian dogmas, which are involved in this controversy, we have here nothing to do, except to say that the controversy itself served as a pretext for the Christians in Syria and Egypt, under the

name of Nestorians and Jacobites, not merely to declare their independence of the Church authority at Constantinople, but also to breed disloyalty to the government which supported that authority and which in their minds was inseparably associated with it. The business of government, in the opinion of these sectaries, was to preserve the faith. Thus the heart of both Syria and Egypt was thoroughly disloyal to the Imperial government long before Mohammed proclaimed his faith, and their inhabitants were doubtless ripe for revolt at that time and waited only for a suitable pretext.

As to the military resources and power of the Empire, which seem to have melted away at the first shock of the onslaught of the Saracens, it may be proper to say a few words. The country was still part of the Roman Empire, and its troops formed a Roman army, but they were as unlike the formidable legions which ages before, under Pompey and Cæsar, had reduced Syria and Egypt to the obedience of Rome, as the power they represented was shorn of that *prestige* of victory which had so long attended the standard which marked the proud authority of *Senatus populusque Romanus*. The Roman army at the time of Heraclius and Mohammed was a motley assemblage, made up of men from all tribes, both within and without the Empire, slaves and strangers chiefly, and without any of that deep-seated instinct of nationality which in former ages had rendered Rome invincible. Discipline and numbers, so long as the pay was regularly made, were still there, and the art of war, but faith and

enthusiasm were not. These men served only as mercenaries, and the luxurious habits of the cities of the East where the legions were stationed, and the practice of conciliating them by large donatives, had greatly weakened their highest military qualities. They had, just before the appearance of Mohammed, been engaged in constant wars with Persia, and in mutinies for increased privileges, but until Heraclius took the bold step of attacking the capital of that country and forced its armies to retreat from Syria, the Roman troops in Asia had been constantly defeated by those of the great king. They had lost Aleppo, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and were forced back across the Hellespont, the Persians being able to establish themselves on the plains of Chalcedon, almost within sight of the walls of Constantinople. Egypt, the only Roman province which had been exempt from foreign war since the time of Diocletian, fell, too, before the power of the Persian king, Chosroes, or Nushirvan. From the danger which by these conquests threatened the existence of the Empire it was delivered by the genius and valor of Heraclius, one of the greatest and least known names in Roman history; but, although his exploits recall her proudest days, from them came no sustained military power capable of resisting the progress of the Saracens. These wars, waged to determine the ascendancy of the Romans or Persians in the East, lasted more than twenty years, and are of interest to us now only as showing the absolute exhaustion of the resources of those enemies from whom

Mohammed had most to fear; for doubtless at that very time he was meditating the extension of his religion by an armed propagandism. The only effectual barrier against the invasion of Eastern Europe by the Saracens, which remained as such unconquered for more than eight hundred years, was the Imperial city of Constantine, which resisted until the year 1453 the repeated and determined efforts of both the Saracens and their successors the Ottoman Turks to reach the heart of Europe over its ruins.

Such, then, being briefly the condition of the country of Mohammed and of the Byzantine and Persian monarchies at the time of his coming, we are ready to ask who and what this man was by whom a new era was to be opened, and by whose teachings the condition of this part of the world was to be so suddenly and so completely changed. Mohammed was born in the year 569, of the noblest race in Arabia,—that of the Koreish, to whom belonged the hereditary guardianship of the *Caaba*, the principal temple, as I have explained, of the national worship, in which, at the time of his birth, no less than three hundred and sixty idols were objects of worship by as many tribes and were regarded by them as their tutelary deities. Mohammed was forty-one years old before he publicly claimed to be a prophet of God. There is nothing mysterious about his early life. He was first a shepherd, and then a tradesman, and by his virtues and by his capacity as a business-man succeeded in marrying the rich woman, Cadijah, in whose employ

he was, and she repaid his devotion by becoming his first convert. He seemed at first a very commonplace person. He was in the habit, like many other earnest men, of retiring to secret places to pray; and he was overcome with sadness as he meditated upon the evils of this world, and especially when he saw how his countrymen were wholly given to idolatry. But his soul was deeper and his spirit was more earnest than those of other men: hence he felt that soul stirred from its lowest depths by a voice which he recognized as unmistakably the voice of God. Mohammed's early life was filled with visions,—revelations as he called them, the delusions of hysteria and catalepsy as his enemies claim. It is impossible here to give all the reasons for the belief that to Mohammed these visions were in very truth realities; that he was entirely sincere and earnest in his belief that he had heard the voice of God; that he was indeed inspired in the same sense as some of the most illustrious characters in history have been,—Socrates, for instance, or Joan of Arc, or Swedenborg, or even the great Cromwell. This voice proclaimed to him the great dogma, "That there was but one God, and that Mohammed was the Prophet of God." Like all men who are in earnest about the truth that is in them, he set about making converts. Long years passed before he could gather more than a mere handful. They consisted of his wife and of some of his near relatives. But during all this time he was fiercely persecuted and his life threatened by members of the Koreish tribe. Such was his position for more than

twelve years ; and as, of course, he could not have foreseen the brilliant success which awaited his plans in the future, as indeed there is nothing to show that he ever dreamed of such success, he must have been supported by an earnest belief in the reality of his mission, when he felt strong enough to carry it on in the loneliness and contempt to which he seemed doomed.

We must not forget that in this early part of his career he professed that his object was to restore the universal religion which had been taught men from the beginning, the absolute unity of God, the religion of all true patriarchs and prophets. Its one duty was, according to him, *Islam*, or submission to the Divine will. Its worship was prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage. Among a people steeped in superstition, the source of the darkest vices, he taught, as the basis of his system for practical life, charity, justice, and chastity, and the duty to do and bear everything for the truth. He preached the essential unity and equality of the human race, and the folly of setting up distinctions among men, as if they could be recognized in the sight of God. It is said that a sort of leaven of monotheism has always pervaded the Arabian race from the time of Abraham and of Ishmael, and that Mohammed's system has on that account no claim to originality. But he made no such claim ; he knew, as all great founders of religion have known, that the true prophet is he who proclaims a doctrine which best meets the spiritual needs of a race at a particular time, or at least the one who can see clearly in what direction they tend.



Mohammed taught that there had been in the history of the world successive revelations of God to the human race, and that each was higher and fuller than the one which preceded it. Abraham, Moses, and Christ were to him, as they are to his followers to this day, true prophets, but he was last and best of all. He never claimed to be infallible; he was conscious that he might make, and even that he often did make, mistakes, but he never lost faith in his mission, and he always believed that the words he spoke came from God. He never claimed himself, although his followers have done so for him, the power of working miracles, although he insisted that he was so filled with the inspiration of the Almighty during his visions that strength was given him to proclaim and execute the will of God. He, like the Fathers of the Christian Church, believed that miracles might be wrought by others, but, like them, he never laid claim to any other miraculous power save that inspiration which enabled him to teach true doctrine.

Mohammed's career may be divided into three epochs. 1. That of his conversion, his proclamation of his doctrine, and his consequent persecution. To this epoch doubtless belong the highest and truest enthusiasm of his nature, and the corresponding purity and blamelessness of his life. 2. When his religion had gained many adherents, and there was a prospect of its becoming the religion of all the Arabian tribes, Mohammed seems to have been in a certain sense intoxicated with his triumph. Changes for the worse appear in some of his

moral teachings, as shown especially in the revelation which he claimed to have received dispensing him from the observance of the law in regard to the limited number of wives permitted to his disciples, and in that still greater change, which has seemed to so many the fatal objection to the sincerity of his belief, the advocacy of the use of the sword in extending his doctrine, not only as an act lawful in itself, but as the imperative duty of all his true followers. 3. The epoch in which Arabia was converted to Islam. It was then taught by Mohammed that his religion was a universal one, and that it should be spread throughout the world by means of an armed propagandism, and that with this object in view other nations, Christian and Pagan, should be offered the alternatives of conversion, tribute, or destruction by the sword. There was a manifest deterioration both in the character of the Prophet and of his religion during these successive epochs. His system was degraded and defiled, as all religious systems are, by a resort to force to secure their ascendancy. The Mohammedanism of history, especially when it became the faith of a race so alien to all the characteristics of the Semitic as that of the Ottoman Turks, is a very different and very much less pure system than that proclaimed by the Prophet himself. Yet, bad as many features of Islam are in history, still no one can doubt that it is a much better and more rational system in many respects than many of the religions it supplanted in the course of its conquests. It is certainly to be

preferred to the Arabian idolatry, to the fetichism of Africa, to the weakness and fruitlessness of Byzantine speculations about Christianity, and to the decayed beliefs of Persia and India.

It seems to me that we should be cautious in following the example of the old writers by calling Mohammed an impostor, and speaking of his religion as a success simply because it gratified sensual appetites. We must remember that there is no mystery or legend blinding us about Mohammed's early life and teachings, as there is about Boudha, for instance, and the Brahmanic cosmogony. We know almost as much of him as we do of Luther or of Milton. He, of all others, stands in "the fierce white light which shines upon a throne," and by that light his greatness and his weakness are equally conspicuous. And as to the attractiveness of his religion, made so by its giving a sanction to the gratification of self-indulgent or sensual appetite, let the indignant comment of Voltaire (no friend of Mohammed) be a sufficient answer: "Oh, canons, monks, parish priests even," he exclaims, "if any one forced *you* to submit to a law that you should eat and drink nothing from four o'clock in the morning till ten at night during Lent, supposing that fast to occur in the month of July, if you were forbidden to play at any game of chance under penalty of eternal damnation, if the use of wine was interdicted to you under the same penalty, if you were obliged to make pilgrimages across burning deserts, if you were required to give one-tenth

of your income to the poor, if, having been accustomed to eighteen wives, fourteen were suddenly taken from you,—if, I say, such a religion was presented to you, I do not think you would dare to call it a *sensual* religion.”

The Koran is the sacred book of the Mussulmans, and its text, *ipsissima verba*, the infallible guide of their lives. Mohammed claimed that the law as revealed in this book was the actual word of God, and that he was the mere channel by which that word was conveyed to the world, or, at most, the editor of the book. The fragments of the Koran, which are in a somewhat disconnected and incoherent form, were produced by Mohammed at his discretion, and as occasion seemed to require, in his sermons and discourses. They were recorded by his adherents on such strangely perishable materials as the shoulder-bones of sheep, oyster-shells, and the like, and were, two years after the death of Mohammed, collected and published by his successor, Abubeker. This book is made up of what are regarded by the Moslems as absolute verities; but its teachings are supplemented, as in all religions, by the life and example of the founder. The sayings of Mohammed to them are so many lessons of wisdom, his acts so many examples of virtue.

The propagation of Mohammed's religion on a large scale began at the epoch known among the Arabians as the “Hegira,” which marks the period of the flight of Mohammed and his companions from Mecca and

their taking refuge at Medina. This was in July, A.D. 622. A considerable number of the people at Medina, including many Jews resident there, were ready to receive as their prophet and leader the outcast from Mecca, with his followers, and to aid him in spreading his rule and doctrine over the whole of Arabia, and especially over the members of his own tribe, the Koreish, who had driven him from Mecca. From this time forth the tone of Mohammed's action became wholly changed. Force was substituted for persuasion, and a new revelation from God was invoked to give it sanction. It is true that the choice of friendship or of submission was proposed to the enemies of Mohammed; but there was no backwardness in the application of military force to secure his object when any hesitation was apparent. "The sword," said the Prophet, "is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer: whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion and odoriferous as musk." In this way his functions as king and as prophet became inseparable, and after a few years of fighting with his old tribe and with the Jews of Arabia they became not only his subjects, but his converts also. This is a very striking feature not only of Mohammed's wars, but of those of all the Caliphs. At first sight nothing is more extraordinary in history than that a few wandering and obscure tribes in such a distant,

sparsely-peopled land as that of Arabia should in a few years march through the most civilized portion of three continents as conquerors ; but when we remember that Mohammed's appeal was to the united force of two of the most powerful motives which swayed human action in those days,—superstition and a love of war,—we gain a glimpse at least of the causes of the military successes of the Saracens, although it must be confessed that there are few events in history more difficult of a full and satisfactory explanation than this. His own country subdued to his faith and rule, Mohammed, just before his death, prepared for the future destiny of Islam.

His first step towards securing the permanent extension of his rule, both as prophet and as king, had been, as we have seen, to gain the union and co-operation of the wild tribes of his own country. Exactly in what proportions his military success over those whom he called rebels, and the fanatical devotion to his creed with which he inspired them, effected this object, it is not easy to say. In the year 632—the year of his death—he felt himself strong enough at home to defy the power of the Greek and Persian monarchs and to send to each of them a message inviting both to profess the truths of Islam. If we did not know the result, we should be inclined to regard such a proceeding as the act of a madman : as such, indeed, the King of Persia, the great King of Kings, the successor of Cyrus, seems to have considered it, for he tore up the paper which contained the

summons, whereupon he was told by the indignant and undaunted messenger that in such a manner his own kingdom would be destroyed by the followers of the Prophet. The Greek Emperor, Heraclius, seems to have treated a similar message with more courtesy, for he is said to have listened to it with great, and probably amused, curiosity. But of course there could be no agreement between Islam and Christianity or the creed of Zoroaster, and a divided rule, much less the fusion of such elements, was impossible. Foreign conquest was evidently the settled policy of Mohammed before his death, for thus only could his system be propagated. It became, by reason of the triumphs of his successors, as much a characteristic of his religion, as long as it maintained its vitality, as the belief in the unity of God and the apostleship of the Prophet.

It was the combined force of fanaticism and discipline which produced the wonderful results of those campaigns which made the Moslems victorious over the old systems. It was not alone intense and intolerant fanaticism for the spread of their religious ideas. They gave from the beginning to all their enemies of different religions the choice of embracing Islam or of paying a tribute and retaining their own faith. Fancy the Crusaders, or, in later times, the Puritans, making such a compromise of what they believed to be the truth! If the Saracens had been zealots such as these, they would have sought to exterminate Christianity in the lands they conquered. And yet doubtless their brilliant

exploits, especially in the beginning, were due in a great measure to their blind faith in that religion of which absolute fatalism was the basis. They hesitated at first, some of them, to undertake the campaigns in Syria and Persia: the odds were too great, the danger appalling, the weather too hot. "Hot!" exclaimed the undaunted Prophet; "hell is hotter; and as to danger, it is appointed unto all men once to die, and for those who die in battle fighting for the faith the unspeakable joys of Paradise are ready and prepared." Whatever may have been the cause, it is clear that in all the early campaigns of the Saracens there was a conspicuous union of the blindest fanaticism with the sternest discipline, and to this their unchecked career of victory is chiefly due. Whenever we see such a combination in history (which is very seldom), as, for instance, in the case of Cromwell's regiments and the Covenanters in Scotland, it seems the condition of assured success.

In this way only can we account for the fact that during ten years of the reign of Omar (the second in succession to the Prophet) the Saracens conquered thirty-six thousand cities or castles, destroyed four thousand churches or temples of unbelievers, and built fourteen hundred mosques for their worship. One hundred years after his flight from Mecca, the rule of the successors of the Prophet extended from the mouth of the river Indus to the Atlantic Ocean, and from the frontier of China to the Red Sea, embracing a very considerable portion of two continents, and the oldest and most



civilized portions of the earth's surface,—Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain.

The Romans, with prudent caution, never undertook more than one war of conquest at a time; the Saracens, in their impetuous eagerness, did not hesitate to attack in one campaign the strongest military powers then existing,—the Greek Empire and Persia.

In the very year of Mohammed's death (632) the Saracens, under the command of Khaled, the "sword of God," as he was called, advanced to the Euphrates, and, after various minor victories, they defeated the Persians in the desperate battle of Cadesia in 636, and thus decided the fate of the empire of Cyrus. The immediate result was the permanent occupation of the country between the Euphrates and the Tigris, known to the ancients as Assyria and Mesopotamia, and even then one of the most fertile and populous districts in Asia. With that extraordinary keenness of the commercial instinct so strong among the Arabs, they did not forget in their religious zeal to take time to establish there a seaport, Bassorah, which has been ever since, in all the vicissitudes of history, and even now is, a most important entrepôt of commerce in that part of the world. What a commentary upon human motives and human ambition! Nineveh the proud, Babylon the great, Ctesiphon the advanced post of Greek culture in those regions, Bagdad the gorgeous city of the Caliphs, are all gone, while Rameses, and Cyrus, and Alexander, and Haroun-al-Raschid are known to us now chiefly as examples of the

vanity of human greatness; and yet this little trading-post of Bassorah has been kept alive while all around has fallen, and that by a motive more potent with mankind in the long run than the love of glory or of power, —the love of making money.

But the Saracens soon pushed on beyond the Tigris, northward and eastward, until they reached the Caspian Sea, conquering many famous cities on their route. Not satisfied with this, they advanced yet farther, occupying Khorassan, the country between the Caspian and the river Oxus; and in twelve years from the time when the holy war was begun, the rule of the Caliph was extended far beyond the Oxus to the frontier of China, and to those regions towards the north then inhabited by a race whose children centuries afterwards, under the name of Ottoman Turks, were to be the successors of the Arabs and the Saracens and to represent in Europe the armed force and power of Islam.

Contemporaneously with the war in Persia came the war in Syria against the Greek Emperor, the ruler of what was left of the Roman Empire in the East. In six years, ending in 638, that famous country was wholly conquered by the Saracens. Bozrah, Damascus, Baalbec, fell in the same year; the next year witnessed the fall of Jerusalem; in 638 Aleppo and Antioch became tributary cities; and for more than three hundred years the Roman province in which Christ was born rested as completely under the rule of the infidel as Arabia itself. Egypt was the next country which yielded to the irresistible

force of the Saracens, and, as they were aided by the good will at least of the native Christians, who held the authorities at Constantinople in abhorrence, there was little resistance offered except by the garrison at Alexandria. The burning of the famous library of that most illustrious city by order of the Caliph is a story which rests upon a somewhat doubtful authority; but if it be authentic the act was one of blind fanaticism, and imitated, it is sad to say, later by the Christians themselves, for the Spaniards after the capture of Granada in 1492 brought from every corner of Spain Arabic books and burned them all, so as to make of their destruction a magnificent *auto-da-fé*. It is said that more than a million and a half of volumes were consumed by fire on this occasion.

Egypt conquered, the Saracens pursued their course westward along the Mediterranean, subduing the Roman province of Africa, more Roman in the days of the decline of the Empire than Italy itself, adding, after a long struggle, ancient Carthage and Mauritania as far as the shores of the Atlantic to their dominions.

In the year 710, the same year in which their co-religionists conquered that portion of India called Scinde, the basin of the great river Indus, the Saracens crossed the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain, and in one battle completely destroyed the Visigothic power in at least three-fourths of that country. They remained there nearly eight hundred years. Of their history in that country, especially of the character of their civilization in contrast with that of Christendom, we shall speak

hereafter. But for the present we must leave the wonderful story of the Saracenic conquests, merely observing, as a clue to guide us to the secret of their persistent influence in history, that amidst the varied fortunes of the Caliphate, divided and distracted as it became by revolutions in the course of time, the Moslems, amidst all their dissensions, agreed at least in this grand profession of faith with which they began: "There is but one God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God."

## CHAPTER V.

### MEDIEVAL FRANCE.

WE turn now from the East to the West,—from what seems the permanent triumph of Islam in Asia and Africa to the slow and hesitating advance of the Christian Church in taming the wild tribes of Western Europe,—from the story of the wonderful conquests upon which the assured strength of the Saracens was founded, to a study of the causes of that weakness, dissolution, and decay which we meet everywhere in the Empire founded by Charlemagne, and which were rapidly developed under the rule of his descendants. No contrast in history is more striking than that thus presented between a decaying Empire built up with Christianity as its recognized basis, and the strength and pride of conquest of the Saracens, who, stimulated by their intense religious faith, had been able, after a struggle of a few years, not only to uproot Christianity in the lands where it was first planted and where its growth had been from the beginning most vigorous, but also utterly to arrest the development of the peculiar ideas of that portion of mankind in whom rested, as we can now see, the hope of the future of the human race.

If we could transport ourselves for a moment to those days of unlooked-for weakness and misery, and

knowing nothing of the future, save that there existed a universal belief that the year 1000 was to witness the end of the world, we should probably be forced to agree with the many sad, thoughtful, and puzzled Christian men of that time, who, looking round them and recognizing the triumph of the false Prophet on every hand, were sorely tried to explain how, in accordance with God's promise, the failure of Christianity and of Christian civilization and the triumph of Mohammedanism could coincide with the consummation of all things. Never, it seems to me, did the actual condition of the race in Western Europe seem one of greater degradation and misrule, or one more hopeless for the future, than it was between the date of the death of Charlemagne and that of the election of Hugh Capet as King of France (814-987). Yet the lesson which this era (which we propose to study in this chapter) teaches is that out of the confusion, chaos, and anarchy of those days grew, in a very important sense, modern Europe, with all its characteristic civilization, and this other lesson, that the only things that are never permanently obscured in history, although our eyes may be darkened to them for generations, are the providence of God and human progress. Illustrating this principle in a remarkable degree, we shall find that the triumphs of the Saracens, rapid, brilliant, and remarkable in many respects as they were, withered away because they had no depth of root, while the civilization of the West, founded on Christianity and the Roman law leavened by barbarian ideas, grew

all the more vigorously and sturdily because it grew slowly, and was made tougher and more enduring by the very storms which beat against it.

The dream of Charlemagne in establishing his Empire was, as will be remembered, twofold. He wished to bring under a subjection similar to that of the Roman Empire all the various races inhabiting the wide territories which he had inherited or which he had conquered, and for that purpose he strove to establish a system of centralization in the administration of his government like that which had been adopted by the Roman Emperors in the government of their various provinces. This grand scheme proved, as I have said, a dream only, partly fulfilled, perhaps, while the iron hand of the great master held together the heterogeneous mass of which his dominions were composed; but no sooner was he dead than the Imperial system, with its principle of centralization, fell to pieces. We cannot explain here all the causes of this catastrophe. It will readily be understood that they are to be looked for in the totally dissimilar condition of the population of the Roman and of the Frankish Empire. The only thing in which they resembled each other, as it appears to our eyes, was the extent of territory over which the chiefs of these two Empires ruled respectively. Charlemagne's Empire extended from the Elbe to the Ebro, and from the German Ocean to nearly the southern limit of Italy. The only unity of organization which the wild tribes and the subject

populations which inhabited this vast territory were then fitted for was that brought about by enforced submission to the conqueror. It was not, as in the Roman Empire even when it had reached its widest limits, an outgrowth of willing subjection to Roman law and a reverence for the Roman name and authority on the part of the conquered. We find rather among them the persistent love of independence so characteristic of all the German tribes, the habit of appealing to force alone to accomplish their ends, an incapacity to conceive of that submission to law as the supreme rule which formed the real strength of the Roman government in its conquered territories,—barbarism, in short, which, too ignorant to comprehend, despised all the refinements of that centralized administration which Charlemagne, in his blind admiration of the Roman system, hoped to restore.

The only surviving son and successor of Charlemagne is known in French history as Louis le Débonnaire, and in German as Louis the Pious. He seems to have exhibited the instincts and character of a monk, rather than those of a King or of an Emperor. His life was passed in acts of devotion to the Church and in quarrels with his sons, who desired during his lifetime that their future patrimony should be divided among them. Each of these sons seems to have been characterized by jealousy of the others, showing itself as much by struggles to secure the largest share of his dominions as by a common contempt for their unfortunate father. Twice was that father deposed by these sons because he could



not or would not yield his authority to them ; and he was harassed to that degree that he was only too glad to look forward to the cloister as a refuge from their cruelty. Nothing could show more completely the depth of the degradation to which the son of Charlemagne had fallen, and his unlikeness to his father, as well as the rapid degeneracy of the government of the great Emperor in his hands, than the willingness of Louis to retire to a monastery and take the vows of a monk ; for by so doing he gave up that which had been in all former times the great source of pride to the true Frankish chief,—the right to be a leader of his countrymen in battle. The burden which his great father had borne so easily crushed him utterly. He was the submissive servant of the Church ; but the preservation of the Imperial power in the family of Charlemagne was too important to her interests to allow us to suppose that she encouraged his extraordinary pusillanimity and un-Franklike conduct. The outlying and subject populations in Germany and Spain were not long in discovering that the mighty hand of Charlemagne no longer governed them, and the Slaves, the Avars, the Arabs, and the Northmen broke out in revolt against the authority of the new Emperor. Louis made various unsuccessful attempts to arrange such a partition of his territories among his sons as would prove satisfactory to them. They had no other effect except to bring the Imperial power into contempt. Owing to the weakness of the central authority, the bonds which had kept the

Empire together became rapidly loosened. Many of the greater nobles took the opportunity, in defiance of the Emperor, to enlarge the boundaries of those benefices which had been confided to them by Charlemagne. The result of all these movements, due, perhaps, quite as much to the feeble character of the monarch himself as to the unfitness of the system of Charlemagne for such a rude age, was that the Empire of 840, the date of the death of Louis, was as unlike that of 814, the date of Charlemagne's death, as a man who is moribund is unlike the same man in full health and vigor. History hardly shows so rapid a decay of a great political system.

The partition made by Louis le Débonnaire, or the Pious, of his Empire among his three sons not having, as I have said, proved satisfactory to any of them, the settlement was left to the arbitrament of war. And it is curious to remark that the Church, in its anxiety to terminate the manifold sufferings endured by the populations throughout his dominions from the perpetual quarrels of those who were striving in arms for the mastery, solemnly absolved all those on both sides who should take part in what was supposed would prove the decisive battle. The bishops in council, after the battle, declared that the parties had fought to secure justice only, that the judgment of God had manifestly settled the right, and that therefore whoever had taken part in the battle, either by advice or by actual fighting, should be absolved from all the penalties prescribed by

the Church for such acts. This seems a survival of the old Frankish and heathen method of ascertaining the will of God; but what a picture of the civilization of the time is presented, when even the Church, powerful as it was in so many respects in those days, could find no more Christian method of settling a disputed succession than the adoption of the lesser evil of discovering the will of God by means of a single battle rather than by a series of prolonged and bloody wars! The battle,—that of Fontanet, 841,—if it did not in itself settle the question of the supremacy of one of the brothers, at all events opened the way to a negotiation among them. This resulted in a treaty between the sons of Louis, grandsons of Charlemagne, in 843, dividing the Empire among them.

This treaty, called the treaty of Verdun, forms an important historical epoch, as we shall see. By it Louis, afterwards called the German, was assigned *Francia Orientalis*, east of the Rhine,—speaking generally, modern Germany; Charles, afterwards called the Bald, that portion of modern France west of the rivers Meuse and Saône to the ocean and the Pyrenees; Lothair, who was the eldest son, a long strip of territory between those portions assigned to his brothers, extending from the North Sea to the Alps, and embracing modern Belgium, Lorraine, Burgundy, and Dauphiny. Lothair was given besides, as the eldest son, the Emperorship, with the nominal sovereignty of Italy. The territory assigned to him was one of a long and narrow shape,

and hence constantly exposed to the incursions of his neighbors, his own brothers, but it embraced within it his three capital cities,—that of Aix-la-Chapelle as King of the Franks, that of Monza as King of the Lombards, and that of Rome as the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. I have said that this treaty of Verdun, in 843, forms an important historical epoch; and it does so, not merely because it settled which of Charlemagne's grandsons should rule certain portions of his Empire, but also because of the underlying principle upon which the partition was effected, and the results which followed from it. By it (1) Europe was permanently divided into the three great nationalities, Germany, France, and Italy. (2) This division was made on the principle of a difference of race and language in the inhabitants of the different districts. Teutons, Celts, and Latins were henceforth to be governed by different rulers, whose first notion of rule was prompted by the instinct of race, and who, as ages went on, drifted wider apart and had less and less in common. (3) Modern Germany, modern France, modern Italy, begin their life in 843, the date of the treaty of Verdun. From that date too, consequently, the Empire of Charlemagne, although nominally and for certain important purposes still surviving, as we shall see, yet for the object for which it had been established ceased to exist.

What concerns us now is not so much the breaking up of the system by which the Empire had been ruled, as that which was substituted for it. Within a few

years after the death of Louis le Débonnaire, the Imperial system was replaced, more or less, in all parts of the former dominions of Charlemagne, by what is known in history as the *feudal system*. This was the characteristic system of government in Europe during the larger portion of the Middle Age. We shall have occasion to speak hereafter of the development of this system in Germany, in England, and in Italy, and we shall confine ourselves now to some account of it in that portion of the Empire which fell in the partition at Verdun, 843, to the share of Charles the Bald,—that is, as near as may be, modern France.

Some preliminary sketch of the origin and characteristic features of the feudal system may be appropriate here. When the Frankish chiefs and those of the other Teutonic tribes invaded Western Europe, they were in the habit of rewarding the fidelity and courage of their companions, or principal followers,—*comites*, as they were called,—who had aided them in their conquests. These rewards consisted sometimes of horses or of arms, but oftener of lands in the conquered countries, and they were made probably at that time without any formal obligation on the part of the person on whom they were bestowed of service to the chief in consideration of the gifts. According to the ancient Teutonic custom, however, as will be remembered, it was considered not only a duty, but an honor, for any young warrior, no matter how high his lineage, to serve under a renowned chief. Such service was performed without

any thought of other reward than the approval and companionship of the chief, this relation constituting military patronage in the old sense. The lands thus presented to these warriors were called *allodial*; that is, their tenure involved no obligation of service whatever. But in the course of time, from various causes, such as the diminution of the number of warriors in consequence of the losses suffered during the perpetual wars of Charlemagne, and the necessity of guarding the more extensive frontiers of the countries he conquered, the following expedient was adopted to secure a more permanent and efficient army; and this forms the germ or basis of the feudal system proper. Lands were no longer bestowed by the sovereign (chief, or king, or Emperor, as he happened to be) as free gifts. They were granted in the form of benefices, or fiefs, as they were called; that is, they were to be holden upon the condition that the grantee should, by virtue of the grant, perform certain services to the lord, generally of a military kind. When these services so agreed upon ceased to be rendered, the lands were forfeited to the original owner, or lord of the fief, as he was called. There was a peculiar ceremony in the early days in the investiture of these fiefs, or lands held in fief, which is very significant, as showing the new relations created thereby between the giver and the receiver. He upon whom the grant was to be bestowed knelt before the lord who was to give him the land, and promised to become his *man*, and to keep faith and loyalty towards him against all

who might assail his right, by every means in his power. The lord then made a reciprocal promise of protection and defence of his vassal, as the grantee was called, and then the investiture was completed by a symbolical delivery to the new vassal of a handful of earth or the twig of a tree. Thus the ownership of land and the rights and duties of its possessors were supposed to be firmly bound together. It may be observed, too, that we here find the germ of the doctrine of reciprocal allegiance and protection which forms so important a chapter in our modern law, and also that of the relation of landlord and tenant, which to-day even in this country is based upon the old feudal conception of lord and vassal.

The process I have described was that observed by the sovereign in conferring large benefices upon his principal officers or *comites*; but these officers subdivided the benefices or fiefs so conferred among their own followers and companions, with the agreement on their part to hold each of these divided portions of the original fief of the person by whom they were immediately conferred, on conditions similar to those by which that person held of the sovereign or overlord. These smaller fiefs were called subinfeudations, and were, in fact, mere miniatures of the larger fiefs. In a short time nearly all the land in France, from reasons which will presently appear, was held in fief, either directly and immediately of the king, or indirectly, by the freemen of lesser wealth or inferior nobility, of

the grantees of the king, so that a thoroughly graded hierarchy, beginning with the king and ending with the smallest landholder, prevailed, which was intended to assure protection and safety on the one side, and loyalty, allegiance, and stipulated service on the other.

This system, it must be remembered, was no ingenious and speculative device, as it has often been represented, to reduce the population of those countries living under it to slavery, but it was eagerly adopted by those who had an interest in the preservation of order, not merely as a method of counteracting that anarchy which then threatened the overthrow of all settled society, but also, and especially, as the only effectual method of repelling the armed invasions of the barbarians, and especially of the Northmen, which began again shortly after the death of Charlemagne. In one sense the feudal system was an endeavor to combine military efficiency with that spirit of independence on the part of the chiefs which was so characteristic of the German warriors in their native lands. The object now, however, of the rulers—the immediate object—was defence of their homes, not to send out expeditions such as those undertaken in the campaigns under Charlemagne. We shall see that, as a system, the feudal form of government, arbitrary and oppressive as we may think it, was in the beginning a necessity of the time. One of the best proofs that it was such is found in its universal adoption throughout Europe. Not only land, but other kinds of property, even offices



in Church and State, were held in fief with a view to protection. We must remember that after the death of Charlemagne there existed for a long time no public authority in Europe strong enough to maintain order throughout a large territory, and that each chief, who had formerly been, perhaps, under the rule of the great Emperor, a firm supporter of his system and authority, now, freed from his control, sought only to increase his own lands and power. The result was a perpetual reign of force, if not of terror, a constant struggle for those objects, where might made right, the end of which was the survival of the strongest, and during which the successful pursuit of the arts of peace became impossible,—a condition of things which, if continued, clearly foreshadowed a relapse into barbarism.

There is a curious feature in the early history of feudalism which shows how it was adopted as a means of security and safety from the utter lawlessness of the times. We read of many free proprietors holding lands by allodial right,—that is to say, without any obligation of service to any one by virtue of such possession,—despairing of any security and protection of their property, since they had no claim to invoke the aid of a powerful chieftain in their defence, *recommending* themselves, as it was technically called, to some renowned warrior or lord; that is, abandoning their free proprietorship, and placing themselves in the feudal relation to such a chief, conveying to him their lands and receiving them back from him in fief, thus assuming towards him the

position of a vassal, and receiving from him in return the feudal obligation of defence and protection. This practice began in France shortly after the death of Charlemagne, and was formally recognized and sanctioned by Charles the Bald by what is called the Edict of Mersen, in 847. It was there provided that every freeman (that is, every one possessed of allodial lands) might choose a lord, who should be either the king or one of his vassals as he might deem best, and that no direct or immediate vassal of the king should be obliged to serve under him in war, unless against a foreign enemy. This edict, while it shows the disintegration of the royal power and proves how the nobility profited from it by transferring the armed force of the nation to itself, also makes it clear that at that time the landholders could find safety only by uniting their interests, and establishing among themselves the reciprocal obligation of service on the one side and protection on the other.

The practice of conveying the royal domain—that is, the lands belonging to the crown—in fief to the great lords, and thus dividing the territory into a number of comparatively small sovereignties, was carried on, either as a matter of policy or of necessity, by all the degenerate descendants of Charlemagne in France, until no land was left to the ownership or under the immediate rule of the king of the vast inheritance of the great Emperor save the city of Laon, which became the capital of his nominal kingdom. France, indeed, ceased to be a kingdom in any proper sense of the word. Its

territory became totally dismembered or disintegrated, and was divided at the close of the ninth century into twenty-nine great fiefs, which had increased in number a hundred years later to fifty-five. Duchies, counties, viscounties, and lordships, in which sovereigns succeeded sovereigns by hereditary right, and distinct laws and customs, all of course at the expense of the central or royal authority, were regularly established therein. Thus France under this system became a mere congeries of distinct governments, the will of the chief in each being practically the only law, and this will was enforced by the power of the sword. The populations within them (except, of course, the serfs, who were regarded as mere chattels) were bound together in the relation of lord and vassal, the principal object being protection.

The fiefs do not seem at first to have been hereditary, but they became so as soon as the system was in full vigor. If the lands only had descended from father to son, the mischief, as the system became firmly rooted, would not have been as serious as history proves it to have been. But not only were the lands hereditary with the services due for them, but the title, and the powers of government also, descended to the possessors with the lands. This absolute and almost arbitrary jurisdiction within their fiefs, thus transmissible to their children by the possessors of the great fiefs, might remain uncontrolled in incapable families for generations, or such *charges*, as they were called, might be, and were often, sold when these haughty barons required money. This method of

governing and of administering the law under the claim of hereditary right by each feudal chieftain was always regarded as one of the greatest practical grievances in France down to the time of the Revolution; and, indeed, the abuses which were inseparable from the working of the feudal machinery, and especially this part of it, even reduced as they were under Richelieu and Louis XIV., were among the principal causes which produced that catastrophe. There is said to be but one form of government in history which meets the universal condemnation of all ruled by it; and that is the feudal system.

It must not be supposed that in the partition of France into feudatories the king was ignored. He, from the very nature of the system, was its head, from whom all authority theoretically descended. He was the fountain of honor, justice, and authority. He was called the *suzerain*, or overlord, and those who did homage to him directly and personally for their fiefs were called grand vassals, and bound by virtue of that homage to obey and support him; but such grand vassals as the Dukes of Burgundy and of Aquitaine and the Counts of Champagne and of Flanders, having within their territories all the royal rights, such as that of making war, of coining money, of making general laws and enforcing them by means of their own tribunals, and who were exempt from the payment of public taxes, were not likely to pay much heed to the orders of a nominal superior, whose claim to rule them rested upon little else than the title of king and the possession of some

small remnant of the former vast royal domain. Practically, the feudal system made the owner of a piece of land, large or small, the absolute sovereign of those who dwelt thereon.

The difference between the later Carolingians and Hugh Capet in their power over their turbulent nobles was this, that the first, although descendants of Charlemagne, possessed only, as has been said, the insignificant town of Laon, while the other was the feudal lord of the duchy of France, the largest fief in the kingdom. We must conceive of the whole territory of France as feudalized,—that is, divided and subdivided into larger and smaller fiefs, nominally constituting a complete hierarchy, with a gradation of powers and responsibilities, in which each landholder obeyed some one above him, and he in turn was obeyed by others beneath him, but where in point of fact the law of force in their relations with their co-feudatories and all save their own vassals prevailed, the right which they most jealously guarded being that of private war with each other.

Of life within these fiefs, especially that of the *villeins* and the serfs on the domain, I shall speak more particularly when I come to discuss the peculiar condition of mediæval agriculture and industry; and I shall have occasion also to show hereafter how the Church, with its ministries, was the light of ages made dark by the rule of the feudal chiefs. It is only necessary to say here that the practical working of such a

system could only tend to develop and strengthen some of the worst traits of the barbarous Teutonic invaders when they were transformed into feudal lords. I do not forget all that has been said of the love of domestic life, of the reverence for woman, of the much-vaunted influence of chivalry and knighthood in this age, all of which, it is claimed, became firmly rooted in European life and society by the peculiarities of the feudal system; but, after all, the shadow of barbarism which was cast by the terrible realities of life in those days of insecurity and lawlessness makes the picture a very dark one. Civilization in its true sense—that is, the highest type of social life possible under the conditions of ancient or mediæval days—must generally be looked for in the cities and not in the country. There is hardly a greater difference between the *agora* of the Greek cities, or the Roman *forum*, and the feudal castle than is to be found between the free and public life of the Greeks or Romans and that led by the knights of the Middle Age in their gloomy fortresses.

I have endeavored to show how little real or permanent union there was among the holders of the different fiefs for any common object, although the very theory of this system required a gradation of rank among free warriors, the object of which was to secure a common protection of their possessions, each contributing to make the military system of defence efficient for all.

The military power of the feudal system to resist a formidable invasion was put to a very severe test in

France just as it was beginning to supplant the Imperial system of Charlemagne. The occasion was found in the long-continued and most destructive incursions of the Northmen, who, as soon as Charlemagne had died, attacked with constantly-increasing force, nearly every year, for many years, the coasts of France and Germany, ascending the rivers in their light boats, penetrating far inland in search of plunder, devastating large towns, and burning monasteries and churches. There seems to have been little effectual resistance made by those in power in France to these assaults. The invaders held the whole course of the Seine as far as Paris, which they besieged three times; they destroyed Bordeaux; they established themselves on the banks of the Loire; and finally they took permanent possession of the finest province in France,—that of Normandy, whose very name, which they gave it, is a perpetual memorial of their victorious prowess. When we remember that these Northmen must have been comparatively few in number, since they came in ships,—that, after all, they were only the rear-guard of that vast army of barbarian invaders which for centuries had assailed the Roman Empire, the last remnant of which it had been hoped Charlemagne had destroyed on the banks of the Elbe,—that the races they attacked in France and Germany were of the same blood and habits as themselves, and were in point of fact only the advanced portion of that same army of invasion to which these Northmen belonged,—when one reflects upon all these things, he is at a loss

to understand why the plundering incursions of these piratical rovers were not checked, especially in France. The truth is, that the resistance was not more effective simply because its organization was not intelligent and vigorous. While the descendants of Charlemagne were quarrelling with each other over the partition of his Empire, the great lords were seizing the opportunity to enlarge their domains at the expense of the royal rights and territory, and each of the leaders was engaged in an ignoble scramble for more land and more power. No one was willing or strong enough to provide for the safety of all when it was threatened by these fierce invaders with a common havoc. The utter inefficiency of the later Carlovingsians in their attempts to repel these invasions, which threatened soon to make France a desert of desolation, and the skill, bravery, and success of several members of one family among their greatest feudatories—that of Robert le Fort, or *Capet*—in rescuing the country from the danger of ruin, were the principal causes of the transfer of the royal authority in France from the second to the third race, as it is called, that is, from the descendants of Charlemagne to those of Robert and Hugh Capet, and of retaining the crown in that family for nearly a thousand years, or until Louis XVI. perished on the scaffold, in 1793.

The first Capet in history was the one appointed by Charles the Bald to defend the *Mark*, as the territory watered by the river Seine was then called, from the



incursions of the Northmen. It was given to him in fief and called the Duchy of France. It was in the defence of this frontier that he acquired fame for himself and power for his family. In his arduous service against these wild and hitherto unsubdued pirates he became the true savior of France. Robert Capet was a statesman as well as a great warrior. The Northmen having been defeated, Rollo, their chief, at his suggestion, was made the feudal Duke of Normandy, a measure which soon brought to a close the piratical expeditions and made in a few generations the Normans the most French of Frenchmen.

The victories of the family of Capet, Dukes of France, pointed out its chiefs as the natural successors of the feeble and unfortunate Carlovingians. The tenth century is filled with the quarrels between them and the house of Capet, whose power and consideration increased with every step, and in 987 Hugh Capet was elected by the great vassals King of France, and the house of Charlemagne became extinct, the last heir being confined in a monastery, a convenient way adopted in those days of getting rid of a troublesome pretender. It will be understood that the title of king added little to the real power of Hugh Capet. That rested, as has been said, upon his possession of the duchy of France, the largest and most important and most central of all the fiefs, and upon a recognition of his services and those of his family by the other great vassals. The annals of the kingdom of France as it

existed under the first four Capetians are singularly bare of events of historical importance, either at home or abroad. It is true that during this period England was conquered by the Norman-French, and that many Frenchmen, some of them great vassals, were engaged in the early Crusades; but the expedition against England was undertaken by the Duke of Normandy without either the aid or the control of the King of France, and it was not until the days of Philip Augustus (1180), of Louis VIII. (1223), and of St. Louis (1236) that the French kings led a national army to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. How little the kingdom of France in the modern sense existed during the feudal *régime* may be illustrated by a statement of the geographical position of the great fiefs by which Hugh Capet and his successors found themselves surrounded for more than a hundred years in their duchy of France. That duchy extended from the English Channel to some distance below the present city of Orleans, sixty or seventy miles south of Paris. It was hemmed in on the northeast by the county of Flanders, on the east by that of Champagne, and on the west by the great dukedom of Normandy. To the southeast was the duchy of Burgundy. Farther south, on the west, below the river Loire, were the duchies of Aquitaine and Gascony, and the counties of Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiny, under the Counts of Toulouse.

Another curious feature of the denationalizing character of the feudal system in France is found in this,

that the King of England was the real governor or feudal sovereign of nearly half of the present territory of France during almost a century. For the English Plantagenet kings were legally Dukes of Normandy as descendants of William the Conqueror, Counts of Anjou as heirs of the Empress Matilda, who had married Guy, commonly called Plantagenet, the lord of that county, and Dukes of Guienne or Aquitaine because Henry II. of England had married Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis VII., who was the heiress of that duchy. The King of England never hesitated to recognize the King of France as his *suzerain* in that country, just as any other of the grand vassals of his crown would have done; and when at last Philip Augustus, in 1204, determined to annex Normandy to the crown, his object was accomplished by the regular process of the feudal law. John, King of England, was summoned, as Duke of Normandy and lord of other fiefs in France, to appear before a court composed of the twelve highest nobles in the kingdom, and was accused of having with his own hand killed the lawful heir, his nephew, Prince Arthur, and thus having forfeited his fiefs to the crown. He did not appear, and the fiefs were accordingly confiscated to the crown and taken possession of by the royal authority, and thus became wholly French.

It will be seen hereafter that modern France, as to its territory, has been made up by a process of absorption of quasi-independent fiefs and their annexation to the crown, and that this process was going on slowly from

the time of Hugh Capet until that of Louis XII.,—987–1500,—a period of five hundred years. It is impossible here to enumerate all the causes which produced this great change, a change which makes the contrast in political opinion and ideas between mediæval and modern France quite as striking as the changes in her territorial jurisdiction. I can only indicate the direction of the stream of tendency, and that may be said, generally, to have been towards an aggrandizement of the power of the king and of a centralized administration at the expense of the authority of the great feudatories and the gradually increasing power of the *tiers-état*. The abuses were so great in the system, the king's authority was so entirely nominal, the obligations of justice and right were so entirely disregarded in the arbitrary exercise of the lord's power, the evils of all kinds threatening anarchy were of such a galling and practical kind, that we are surprised that resistance was not offered sooner than it was.

The king, as *suzerain* or overlord, was, as we have seen, powerless. Apparently, resistance came first from the towns, or *communes*, as they were called, all being then under feudal subjection, and presenting, of course, wherever there was any trade or industry in the town, great temptation to plunder. It is instructive to know that the very first town that resisted (about the year 1109) because the tyranny of its feudal superior was no longer endurable was one that had a bishop for seigneur or lord, the old city of Laon, the last stronghold and refuge of the Carlovingian kings, and then a place

of considerable importance. The subject of the rise of free cities is a very large one, especially with reference to its far-reaching result on the general progress of civilization. We can only speak now of that aspect of it which has to do with the resistance of these cities to feudal oppression, and the evidence it affords of their strength. The revolt of the city of Laon against its feudal lord, the bishop, will illustrate what was done, and done successfully, during the twelfth century by one-third of all the towns in France with the same object and generally with the same result. The inhabitants, weary of their misrule, taking advantage of the absence of their lord, met and established a representative municipal government of their own, and then purchased the feudal right of lordship from the seigneur and transferred it to the government which they themselves had substituted for it, in trust for their benefit. They then paid to the king, Louis VII. (about A.D. 1137), as *suzerain*, or overlord, a certain sum of money for a patent or charter confirming the legality of the new government which they had established. There were many and long struggles in this town and in the others which had adopted similar measures before the *affranchisement des communes* was fully settled as against the lords; but this was one of those revolutions which do not go backward, and in its results one of the most fruitful in the history of the age. It ended not merely in taking away from the feudal nobles the most important source of their revenues, derived from the

arbitrary taxation of the wealth of the towns, but it transferred also the power over the inhabitants for certain purposes to the king, while the franchises of the inhabitants were secured by a representative system of government. The *bourgeoisie* of the towns had evidently found the joints in the heavy armor of their oppressors, and the king and the *bourgeoisie*, bound by a common interest, lost no opportunity of assailing, as occasion presented, the overgrown pretensions of these petty local despots.

The Crusades, like the rise of the free cities, had much to do with lessening the power and independence of the higher feudal nobility. The Crusades were a popular movement, and vast multitudes of serfs no doubt gained their freedom by becoming Crusaders, the universal military code in all ages, I believe, providing that none but a freeman can be a warrior. Besides, the feudal chiefs, as the Crusades went on, took part in them, and they needed money to appear with befitting dignity as leaders and to provide for the equipment of their retainers. But the money was in the hands of the *bourgeoisie* of the great towns, not in those of the lords. A principle of feudal law prohibited the conferring of a fief upon any person not noble (*roturiers*, as they were called). How, then, was the money to be secured by the seigneur, who, of course, had nothing but his lands to offer in order to obtain it? Philip Augustus, one of the most treacherous but one of the ablest kings France ever had, solved the difficulty by decreeing that

the royal investiture of any man with a fief should raise him at once from the rank of a *roturier* to that of a noble. This policy was carried out on a large scale soon after, and of course was a fatal blow to feudalism, as the hereditary right to certain powers and dignities was no longer exclusively possessed by those of noble birth. As a result, these powers and jurisdictions, or rather the lands which conferred them, were not confined to a particular caste, but could be bought and sold like other things, and the question became, not who had the longest pedigree, but who had the best-filled purse. It was soon found out, too, that *roturiers* could fight in a cause which they had at heart quite as well on foot as the knights did on horseback ; and the weavers of Flanders at the battle of Courtray (1302), and the English yeomen at Crécy and at Poitiers (1346), proved clearly that the true military strength of a country did not lie in its armed knights and their feudal array, but in the efficient military organization of its people.

The preponderance of the feudal system, as representing a power in France which was exercised by numerous petty sovereigns, each practically supreme within his own sphere, exercising authority for his own purposes, and setting at defiance both the power of the king and disregarding any claim to political rights on the part of the *tiers-état*, or non-noble class, ceased during the hundred-years' war between England and France (in 1328), undertaken to maintain the claim of Edward III. to the French crown. The direct evidence of

this great change is found in the ennobling of *roturiers* and their investiture with fiefs, as well as in the growing power of the crown, due chiefly to the annexation of the fiefs of some of the greater nobles to it. It is to be seen also in the frequent convocations of the States-General or Parliament of France, in which the representatives of the towns, or the *tiers-état*, occupied a position of as great influence theoretically in the settlement of the affairs of the kingdom as the nobles and clergy, as well as in the growth and greater relative importance of the towns themselves, and in the revolt of the peasants,—La Jacquerie, as it was called. All this goes to show that, while the feudal power in France still remained strong, the exclusive feudal privilege of governing the country with no other object than the aggrandizement of the power of the local feudal chieftains was beginning to give way.

During the hundred-years' war the kings, and especially Charles V. (called le Sage), thought to add to the means of defending the kingdom by curtailing as far as possible the privileges of the nobles and by increasing those of the *bourgeois*. Perhaps the utter incapacity and feebleness of the nobility shown during the wars with the English, their division into parties for and against foreign invasion, and the ruin and distress they brought upon the country which it was their duty to defend, deprived them at last of the only pretext—that of their services as defenders of the realm—upon which they could base the claim to the maintenance of



the extravagant privileges which their order had so long enjoyed. It is a curious fact that the instinct of nationality and the destruction of the claim of this exclusive and privileged class to be regarded as the true defenders of the country were born in the French mind at the same time. More curious still is it that, when France was torn to pieces by the quarrels of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs and by the frightful excesses of the English invaders, a young peasant-girl should have revived the hopes of the country, then brought to the verge of ruin by the criminal ambition of the haughtiest of her nobles. When these nobles had long failed to rescue France, she raised the fortunes of the king and inspired her countrymen with such enthusiasm that they were able to make a united effort to drive out the stranger, so that the lost provinces were recovered, and the English reigned no longer in France. There are many aspects of the story of Jeanne d'Arc which remind us, as we recall them, almost of the enthusiasm aroused by the message of an inspired prophet; yet certainly on no surer basis can her fame rest in history than that she was the first apostle in France of that sentiment of national unity binding all her children together, in opposition to the separatism of the feudal policy, which modern Frenchmen at least believe to be not merely the nurse of all patriotism, but the inspiring motive of that ardent desire so characteristic of their countrymen at all times to be the leaders of civilization in Europe.

The political importance of the feudal nobles did not,

of course, cease with the loss of many of the important powers of government which they possessed during the Middle Age. They retained, indeed, many of their seignorial rights and jurisdictions until they came into conflict with Richelieu and his system of centralization. Under his powerful rule every claim which interfered with the full exercise of the royal centralized authority was disallowed, and the castles were razed to the ground. The French nobles had for more than four hundred years to fight hard to maintain their recognition as a class,—the leading class in the government of the country,—and for the preservation of such of their privileges as were not regarded as inconsistent with the supremacy of the crown. At last the Revolution destroyed them as a distinct order or class in the nation, because it was felt that whatever services their ancestors might have rendered to France,—and none were greater, as we have seen, than those of the founder of the family of the unfortunate king (Louis Capet, as his judges derisively called him),—still all that remained at the close of the eighteenth century was privilege without service, than which nothing can be more odious.

We sometimes hear it said that the natural limits, as they are called, of modern France, should be those of ancient Gaul,—viz., the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Rhine, and the ocean. But if I have succeeded in showing how modern France, as distinct from the country of the ancient Franks, was formed, it will be inferred that the process by which this result was reached was one

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of simple absorption, and that there is no such thing as natural boundaries. Beginning with the fief of Hugh Capet or his ancestor Robert in 987 (the Duchy of France), we find all the provinces in turn absorbed and annexed to the crown: Normandy, Champagne, Touraine, and Languedoc during the thirteenth century; Poitou, Saintonge, the Lyonnese, and Dauphiny in the fourteenth; Maine, Anjou, Guienne, Gascony, and Provence in the fifteenth; and the remaining great fiefs or provinces at still later periods.

## CHAPTER VI.

### GERMANY, FEUDAL AND IMPERIAL.

THE partition of the Empire of Charlemagne among his grandsons was made by the treaty of Verdun in 843. By the agreement then entered into, the foundations of modern France, Germany, and Italy were laid. Some account has been given of the immediate results of the partition, and especially of the development of the feudal system in France. It is now proposed to speak of some of the characteristic features of the history of Germany during the Middle Age, beginning with the division of Charlemagne's Empire in 843.

We are so accustomed to look upon France and Germany not merely as distinct countries, but as differing from each other so completely in all those characteristic features which go to make up a nationality, that it is not easy to conceive a state of things in Europe at any period of history when they had much in common. It is nevertheless true that they had both lived under the same kings—the kings of the Franks—for nearly five centuries, that the same forms of government prevailed among them, that they had both been ruled by the great Charlemagne, that the greater part of the population in both belonged to the same race, and that

each branch of the family into which the Frankish tribes were divided by the treaty of 843 claims even to this day Charlemagne as its special type and representative, and his glory as that of its founder. Besides, after their separation, that feudal system which was the outgrowth of the confusion arising from the weakness and decay of the Imperial system was characterized by the same forms, institutions, and peculiarities in both those two great divisions of the Empire afterwards known as France and Germany. So true is this in regard to the constitution of the feudal form of government that a description of its peculiar organization and the sphere of its operation in one of these countries will serve generally to explain its course and development in the other. What I have said, therefore, in regard to the feudal system in France may be applied, with little qualification, to the beginnings at least of that system in Germany. These two countries have drifted apart very widely since the days of Charlemagne's grandsons; but we must, if we wish to study history aright, remember that they had, if not a common origin in race, at least for many generations a common rule and common ideas of government, and that the process which has now for a long time made their relations to each other those of hate and rivalry was a slow one.

The reasons which led to the adoption by two great branches of the Frankish family—East Franks, West Franks,—Germany and France—of the feudal form of

government were common to both. The history of the beginnings of this system is the same in both, but the final outcome was very different, and the contrast in the methods of its development in the two countries forms one of the most instructive and interesting chapters in history. The results, from causes which we shall have to investigate, were in some respects wholly opposite. In France, as I have explained, the force during the Middle Age was centripetal, or tending towards the centre, at least in the latter period; in Germany, that force was always centrifugal, and all power of cohesion between the several parts became gradually destroyed. In France, as the feudal life ran its course, everything gradually tended to unity, monarchy, centralization; in Germany, the spirit of locality, separatism, decentralization, prevailed. France comes out of the Middle Age into modern history, after a struggle of seven centuries, strong, united, intensely national; Germany, on the contrary, split up into hundreds of little principalities, with hardly closer relations to their Emperor than those of the great vassals of France to Hugh Capet when they elected him their king. Our main object in this chapter is to try and discover some explanation of this extraordinary difference; in other words, to ascertain why the same system of government should have produced such different results in the two countries.

Lewis the German (grandson of Charlemagne), to whom, by the treaty of Verdun, East Francia—that is, Germany east of the Rhine—had been assigned, dying

in 876, was succeeded by his surviving son, Charles the Fat. He, proving himself utterly incapable of defending the country against the incursions of the Northmen, and therefore unfit to perform the essential duties of King of the Franks in those days of violence, was deposed in 888 by his nobles. He was the last legitimate male descendant of Charlemagne; and such was the superstitious reverence at that time for the race of which the great Emperor was the founder, notwithstanding the extraordinary and well-proved incapacity of each one of its members save the chief, that the nobles decided to choose as their king, on the death of Charles, an illegitimate descendant of the Emperor,—Arnulf,—simply because the blood of Charlemagne ran in his veins. Arnulf proved not an unworthy scion of his illustrious ancestor.

The principal tribes in Germany at the time of the death of Arnulf were six in number, inhabiting the following districts: 1st, *Saxony*, the largest territory, and the most renowned for its warriors, between the Lower Rhine and the Oder, the North Sea and the Hartz Mountains, including modern Hanover, Westphalia, Brunswick, and Northern Prussia. The Saxons were the last barbarians subdued by Charlemagne, and they still retained their fierceness and strength. 2d, *Thuringia*, south of the Saxon lands, a district not specially remarkable in mediæval history. It formed, later, part of the duchy of Saxony. 3d, *Franconia*, or country of the East Franks, —Central Germany, from the Middle Rhine eastward to

the Elbe, or nearly so. 4th, *Bavaria*, the central southern portion of Germany, extending to the eastern frontier, or Ostmark, afterwards known as the Archduchy of Austria. 5th, *Swabia*, Southern Germany and German Switzerland, from the Alps to the Danube and beyond. 6th, *Lorraine*, the border-land between France and Germany, from the Alps to the North Sea. At the head of each of the tribes occupying these districts was a chief, called a Duke, who, during the whole Middle Age, was the hereditary sovereign of the lands occupied by it. From one or other of these families was chosen the German king, or Emperor as he was called, until the end of the thirteenth century, and the struggle between these dukes and the king whom they elected from their own number forms one of the most important chapters of mediæval history in Germany.

But previous to this rivalry for supremacy among these families it was necessary that Germany should be made secure from invasion. It is satisfactory to find that the real title of those princely houses who struggled for the headship or the kingship of the country in early times was in almost all cases the real service they had rendered in resisting the barbarian invaders. Their claims rested upon the public gratitude for such services, and if their rule was one of force we must remember that its most conspicuous display was made for the public good. Resistance to invasion was the great preoccupation of the time, and the worthiest was he who was not merely the strongest, but the bravest



in averting the ruin which threatened Germany from these invasions.

The male posterity of Charlemagne in Germany became extinct on the death of the son of Arnulf, Lewis the Child. The nobles of the different tribes, anxious, after the customs of the primitive Germans, to retain the kingship in the family of Charlemagne, elected Conrad, who was descended from him in the female line, as their king. But he proved unable to drive out the barbarians, who, during his reign, penetrated far into Germany, or to subdue the pretensions to independence of the powerful Duke of the Saxons, Henry. On the death of Conrad, who had been mortally wounded in a battle against the invaders, and at his own suggestion just before his death, the nobles chose as his successor, in 919, his rival and enemy, Henry, Duke of the Saxons, known in history as Henry the Fowler. The Saxons, of whom he was the chief, it will be remembered, had proved the most obstinate and powerful of all Charlemagne's enemies. They were nominally subdued by him and made Christians, if the act of baptism forced upon them as an alternative for drowning could make them such. Since his death their strength (and they were the most powerful of all the German tribes) had been used to secure their own independence, and therefore to destroy whatever German unity existed under Charlemagne's policy. Their attitude changed when their chief was chosen king by his fellow-chieftains. Henry is said to be the true founder of modern Germany, and his pretensions are based upon

this, that he really first gave Germany to herself free from the perpetual torrent of invasion which up to his time had constantly threatened to overwhelm it. He conquered the Wends to the east of the Elbe, he defeated the Northern Slavonic tribes on the frontiers of Saxony, and he drove back the Hungarians at Merseburg (933) with such frightful slaughter that they ceased thereafter to molest Germany. He did more, for he filled the frontier country with German colonists, who soon proved an effectual barrier against further invasion. These districts were called *marks*, and their governors margraves, men selected by the king for their approved valor and capacity to guard and rule these outlying portions of Germany. Many of these marks became in the course of time, under the rule of a succession of able chiefs, kingdoms and duchies, with preponderant political influence in Germany. The present house of Prussia is descended from the first ruler of the mark of Brandenburg, and that of Austria from the chief of the Ostmark or Eastern mark, and of Styria or Steiermark.

The German kings for the first three centuries and a half, and until the direct line in each became extinct, were taken from three great families or dynasties. These kings of Germany or of the Franks were chosen by the great vassals, and did not become such by hereditary right. Thus, the first dynasty was the Saxon, of which I have just spoken, and of which Henry the Fowler was chief. Its princes reigned from 919 to 1024; the second, that of Franconia, 1024–1125; and the third,

that of Swabia or Hohenstauffen, 1138-1254. It is impossible, of course, to give even a sketch of the events which distinguished these reigns, or even the dynasties, in Germany. There are many illustrious names on the roll of these German kings, the Othos, the Henrys, and the Fredericks of history, but there is a weary sameness in the record of their reigns, which, so far as Germany was concerned, were taken up in perpetual and vain efforts made by the kings to subdue the independent spirit of the various princes and to bring them into subjection to the central royal authority. We see here, as I have said, that process of centralization and tendency to unity which marked the history of France reversed. The great vassals succumbed at last in that country to the king, and their fiefs were united to the crown; in Germany the feudal principle of separatism triumphed, and the fiefs became hereditary with sovereign authority remaining in the families of their original possessors. The principal parties to this struggle for more than two centuries were the houses of Saxony and those of Franconia, and afterwards of Hohenstauffen, and their conflict gave rise to the historic names of Welf and Weiblingen, or, as they were afterwards called in Italy, Guelph and Ghibeline, the former representing in Germany opposition to the kingly, as it did in Italy opposition to the Imperial power.

The chief interest to the general student in the history of many of the illustrious men who were German kings of the first three dynasties is due to their having been

at the same time Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, and to their relations in this double capacity with Italy and the Pope. Of these we shall speak presently. As German kings merely, these men had little real authority. They, or at least the earliest among them, had no fixed home, but kept moving about from one place to another throughout Germany, administering justice among their vassals, and preparing for war when not actually engaged in it. They had no settled revenue derived from taxation, and their private domain, which consisted principally of immense forests, was scattered throughout the Empire. The Germans still continued to regard every public tax, as they had done in their primitive days, as a badge of servitude. All services were rendered in person by their vassals. There was no regular armed force raised and maintained by the king as such: the army consisted wholly of the feudal vassals and their followers, forming a sort of cavalry militia with the barons at its head. This array, which, by the conditions attached to the fiefs, served for a short period only, had been substituted for the ancient levy of freemen. The knights (*Ritters*) became not merely the leaders in battle, but were bound by the peculiar feudal ties to the immediate lord whom they served, and thus devotion to their liege lord became the characteristic type of the warriors in that age, instead of that passion for independence and freedom by which the ancient Germans had become so greatly distinguished. There was no longer any *Mallum* or *Champ de Mai*, except,

perhaps, for the election of a king. All the conspicuous marks of the feudal system, as I have described them in France, existed in Germany also. The gloomy castle, and the still gloomier life within it, the right of private war, the truce of God, the ceremonial of chivalry, the arbitrary rule, the miserable condition of the serfs, and the depressed state of the free rural laborers,—all these were to be found equally in both countries.

Cities seem to have grown more rapidly in Germany than they did in France. Henry the Fowler, with true political sagacity, was the first, it is said, to induce the Saxons to dwell in towns. These rose round military stations, or under the shadow of those great cathedrals the building of which lasted many years and drew near them necessarily large bodies of workmen. These cities were true places of refuge to the oppressed vassals of the neighborhood, who fled to them to escape their master's arbitrary cruelty, and they soon became large communities. From germs like these grew up the famous cities of the Rhine country, Mentz, Worms, Speyer, Strasburg, Cologne, and, indeed, most of the great cities in every part of Germany conspicuous in mediæval history. These cities were usually self-governed; that is, they were free from any feudal servitude except to the Emperor as overlord; but the laboring class in them was much oppressed by the burghers. They are known in history as the Free Cities of the Empire. I shall have something to say in another chapter concerning the trade and commerce of these cities as

elements in the progress of civilization. There can be no doubt that they were the great centres of what was most vigorous in the national life of the mediæval era. They were usually fortified as a means of protection, and the principal buildings which they contained were the churches, especially the cathedrals, and the town halls. The two hundred years which succeeded the year 1000, which period had been looked forward to as that which had been appointed by the Almighty for the end of the world and for the final judgment, was the era of the glory of the Gothic architecture in Germany. Cathedrals were begun in almost every considerable city whose architecture to this day excites the wonder and the admiration of the beholder. The history of the Gothic architecture does not throw much light upon the question how the striking contrast between the qualities which could produce these marvels of art and the characteristic rudeness of the age is to be accounted for. The glorious cathedrals which the traveller finds in all the old towns in Europe, as well as the grand town halls in the wealthy manufacturing cities of the Netherlands, have well been called books in stone, and are among the most wonderful monuments of the true life of the Middle Age, ecclesiastical and municipal, little as we can comprehend the spirit which produced them.

These cities were connected by those true agencies of civilization, public roads and highways. These roads, even in those rude days, extended along the valley of the Rhine from Basle to the ocean, and along the course

of the Danube from Constantinople to Ratisbon, whence other roads branched off until they reached the great trading cities in Northern and Eastern Germany. Italy, too, was connected with Germany by roads over the various passes of the Tyrolean Alps, on which was maintained a constant traffic with the Italian cities, Germany receiving thus the coveted spices, silks, and precious stones of the East in exchange for the products of her mines, forests, and fisheries. It is not to be wondered at, then, that these cities were the true centres of civilization, according to our modern standard, in the Middle Age. The warlike deeds, the raids, and the plunderings of the haughty, fierce, and ignorant nobles who surrounded them have received, perhaps, an undue prominence in the history of the times. Nothing, indeed, could well be more marked than the line which then divided the country from the city, or than the contempt with which the nobles regarded the inhabitants of towns who showed skill and gained money by the practice of the mechanic arts. While the citizens scorned their attempts to coerce the municipalities, and banded themselves together for common protection, the nobles often became mere plunderers of their merchandise in transit, and were well called robber-knights.

But, as I have said, the position which the German kings, or kings of the Franks, held during the Middle Age at the head of the monarchs of Christendom, was especially due to this, that, while they were powerful kings, they were, at the same time, Emperors of the

Holy Roman Empire. They were, in theory at least, world-monarchs. The title of king during the Middle Age had a certain technical limited meaning. It was appropriate only as designating a ruler over a definite territory or country. That of Emperor was applied to one who, after the manner of the ancient Roman Emperor, was the universal ruler, or master of the world. There were many kings, but there could be but one Emperor. So Charlemagne was King of the Franks, that is, ruler of the dominions of that nation. As such he was a mighty potentate, governing all Western Europe. But when he was crowned by the Pope (800) Emperor, *Imperator Semper Augustus*, although he did not thereby gain a foot of territory, he became the successor and representative, according to the universal opinion of that age, of the most majestic power the world had ever seen, that of the Roman Empire; and when the popular imagination, as well as the gratitude of the Church, recognized him as Cæsar, that one word symbolized a man invested with the highest earthly dignity.

I have already explained the theory of Charlemagne's relation to the Pope, and the grand scheme that was arranged for dividing the government of the world between them. The Emperorship was to have been hereditary in his family, but by the year 900 his posterity, to whom the government of Italy had been assigned at Verdun, was extinct, and those of his family in Germany who might have been entitled to



claim the lofty position and title of Roman Emperor were too much engaged in beating back the invaders of their native country to think of embarking upon foreign expeditions in order to obtain the Imperial crown and the name of Cæsar. Meantime, certain princes of Italy, in the absence of the Germans, had the hardihood to take possession of the crown which had been worn by Charlemagne, and to call themselves *Italian Emperors*. These men have been called more properly "phantom Emperors," and it is very certain that they had neither the power, nor the lofty conceptions of the universal sway and important functions attached to the office, which had led Charlemagne to style himself successor of the Cæsars. Anarchy and confusion then prevailed everywhere in Italy,—a state of things caused chiefly by the infamous character of the Popes of the time, who disgraced St. Peter's seat, and by the constant struggles among the petty Italian chieftains for power.

Under these circumstances, the Pope, John XII., whose power was threatened by one of these Italian Emperors, Berengar, in 962, called upon Otho, King of the Franks, the second King of Germany in the Saxon line, as his predecessors had called upon Pepin and Charlemagne, to rescue him from those Italian princes who defied his authority, and to resume that position in relation to the Holy See which Charlemagne had once occupied, and which it was said it had been his intention that the King of the Franks, as the foremost of the people of Christendom, should always

occupy. Accordingly, Otho descended into Italy with a large force, reconquered the country, and was crowned by the Pope, in 962, as Charlemagne had been, master and Emperor of the whole world, or of the Roman Empire, for at that time both terms had the same meaning. Thus there was a renewal of the strange alliance between Germany and Italy. How far this revival involved the obligations which had been undertaken by Charlemagne and Leo it is not easy to decide, but it is certain that the new arrangement, like the old, was big with consequences not merely to Germany and to Italy, but to the future of the whole of Europe. The German kings as Roman Emperors did not hesitate to show their interpretation of the power conferred, by deposing one Pope after another. The plan did not work at all smoothly nor as the parties to it could have anticipated. History shows us each party striving to gain the advantage of the other in the interpretation of the terms of the bargain; and, whatever else may have grown out of it, discordant views concerning its meaning gave rise, among other things, no doubt, to the famous dispute about the "Investitures," to the subsequent downfall of the Imperial power in Italy, and to the irreparable injury of Germany, not merely by rendering impracticable the relations into which the scheme brought its rulers in the Church and in the State, but also by employing the activity, energy, and resources of Germany in controlling foreign Italian politics instead of directing them to advance home interests.

As I have said, Otho the Great regarded Italy as a conquered territory, and made its princes and cities feudal vassals; but in regard to the papacy he appears as a reformer, striving to place persons of at least decent life and habits in St. Peter's chair. Although he had been sent for by the Pope to aid him in maintaining his pretensions, he was so shocked by the bad character and morals of those high in office in the Church, and the general corruption which prevailed at Rome under the papal authority, that, with the aid of a synod of ecclesiastics which he convened, he deposed the reigning Pope, and put in his place his own secretary, a layman named Leo. It is a curious fact, however, that the Romans themselves, although often ruled by bad Popes, had so fierce a jealousy of the interference of foreigners in their affairs that on the many occasions upon which the Emperors were forced to occupy Rome during the Middle Ages for the purpose of restoring order by deposing the Popes, no sooner had the work been done and the Emperor had left the city with his army, than the populace broke out in rebellion against the rule he established and restored that of the Pope. Nothing is clearer in mediæval history than that the place where the great Emperor of the world always had least power and influence was in his own capital, the city of Rome.

Still, the power to which that illustrious city gave the name and the *prestige*, shadowy as it was, retained for ages a strange fascination for these children of the North. Otho's grandson, third Emperor of the name,

was not a mere rude and strong warrior, a typical chief of the Franks. He was a dreamer of great dreams, as Charlemagne had been, but he lacked the force, the vigor, and the practical sagacity of that great man, by which his dreams might become realities. But his conception of his relations to the Church and his duties as Emperor were even more lofty. Nothing less would satisfy his imagination than a scheme for the abandonment of the kingship of Germany and a substitution of the Emperorship of the world for it, thus identifying himself wholly with the Roman Cæsars by transferring the seat of empire to the city of Rome, and governing Germany and the far-distant East, as the Cæsars had done, as provinces. Fortunately for Germany at least, the proper government of which he would have abandoned had this scheme been carried out, he died at an early age. He lived long enough, however, to continue the reforming work of the German Emperors at Rome by nominating two Popes, both Germans,—one his cousin, and the other his preceptor (the celebrated Gerbert, afterwards Sylvester II.),—in place of the profligate Italian priests who aspired to the papacy. It is to be observed that the opinion of Charlemagne that it was the duty of the world's Emperor so to use his power that the Pope, as God's vicegerent on earth, should be at least free from vices which were inconsistent with his lofty pretensions, and that his life should be such as not to be a matter of scandal to Christian people,—this duty, in an age of horrible corruption, iniquity, and

barbarism, was not neglected by Charlemagne's successors. It really seems that without some such powerful champions for the right as these Emperors proved themselves to be, the papacy in those days of darkness must have perished from its own rottenness.

This reforming tendency is to be found not merely in the Emperors of the Saxon dynasty, but in those of the Franconian and Swabian line also. Henry III. deposed, without hesitation, three rival Popes, each of whom claimed to be the rightful one, and appointed their successors. All the kings of Germany of these dynasties made it almost the first business of their reigns to go to Italy to secure their possessions, to assert the authority in Church affairs which they claimed to have derived from Charlemagne, and to be crowned Emperor by the Pope at Rome. These Italian expeditions after a while produced abundant fruit, but not such as the Emperors had anticipated. The High Churchmen, if they may be so called, with the Popes at their head, began at last to learn the lessons taught by the German Emperors; but they felt that reform should begin within the Church and be carried out by its own authority, and not by that of laymen, not even the Emperor himself. In other words, what was needed, in their opinion, was discipline over the clergy, exercised only by the authority of the Church itself.

At that time the crying abuses in the Church were simony, or the sale of ecclesiastical preferments for money, and a married clergy. The one placed the

priests, it was supposed, too much in the power of wealthy and unscrupulous noblemen who shared with them the revenues of the Church lands, and the other withdrew them too much from their proper priestly duties, besides conflicting with the Church's ideal notion of priestly purity. In short, it was felt that the lay power, from the Emperor down to the proprietor of the smallest benefice, had too much control in the administration of Church affairs; and the device which was resorted to to get rid of this lay interference, even when put forth as a remedy for admitted evils, was one of the grandest and most audacious recorded in history, and was devised by the boldest and most remarkable man of the many remarkable men in the long roll of the Popes,—Hildebrand, Gregory VII.

The dispute which brought into striking prominence the pretensions upon which this theory of the relation of the civil and ecclesiastical power was founded is called that of the *Investitures*; and it arose in this way. Gregory VII., fully convinced that the greatest evil of the Church in his time was its thorough secularization, on his accession in 1075 issued a decree providing that hereafter no bishop should receive his office or be invested with the temporalities belonging to it from any layman under conditions of service to such layman, and that no payment of money should be made for obtaining such an office, under the penalties of simony. In Germany, Henry IV., of the Franconian dynasty, was then king, and the result of the decree, if enforced,

would have been to deprive him of a large revenue, for the clergy of all degrees held their estates by feudal investiture from him and occupied nearly half of the territory of his kingdom. As long as the king appointed the bishops, he in a great measure dictated the ecclesiastical policy of his nominees, and of course, as donor of their lands and their incomes, controlled them. Henry refused to obey the decree of Gregory VII., and convened a synod in Germany which deposed the Pope. The Pope replied by excommunicating Henry, who was the first German sovereign whom the Popes had dared to attack in this way (1076). This excommunication legally (by canon law) released his subjects from their obedience, and the result was, under the influence of the Saxon nobles, who had always been jealous because the Emperor had been taken from the rival Franconian house instead of their own, that a general defection of his subjects became imminent. The king—or Emperor, rather, for he had been crowned Emperor by the Pope—found that he was overmastered by the Church, and intimated that his desire was to submit to the Pope and receive absolution. It ended, as is well known, in the extraordinary spectacle of the world's titular master presenting himself (1077), clad as a penitent, at the gate of the castle of Canossa, in the Apennines, waiting for four days and nights exposed to a snow-storm, until the haughty Pontiff thought the Emperor sufficiently humbled to be received by him and upon his complete submission to be readmitted to the bosom of the Church

by absolution. This picture of the utter prostration of the lay power at the feet of the ecclesiastical is one of the most striking in history ; but it is hardly more extraordinary than the reasons which are given to explain and justify it. Henry's submission, as the event proved, was feigned ; but the Church never forgot the lesson of the vastness of its power taught by this humiliating scene. Gregory's claim was not novel, and it has never been abandoned ; but it had never been enforced by the Church in such a manner as this. It was nothing less than a claim not only that the spiritual power was the first and highest and controlling element in human society, but that it included the right to command the temporal, and, in case of need, to compel its obedience. While Gregory's vigor undoubtedly reformed much that was evil in the Church, his lofty pretensions, based on the theocratic principle, set an example to the Innocents and the Bonifaces of later days for using that power for far less worthy purposes, while the claim and its enforcement roused an intensely anti-papal feeling in Germany, especially in the cities, which grew in strength and bitterness until the time of the Reformation. Hence this quarrel about the Investitures has an important bearing upon the course of German history.

The same may be said of the other great quarrel between Germany and Italy during the Middle Age,—that of Frederick Barbarossa and his grandson, Frederick II., with the Italian cities, concerning their claim to be freed from feudal servitude to the German Emperors,—



a dispute which was complicated by the interference of the Pope on behalf of the cities. The German Emperors had, as I have explained, conquered Italy over and over again since the days of Charlemagne. Both the princes and the cities were, according to the strictest interpretation of the law then universally prevailing, the feudatories of the Emperor, and as such were bound to render him the customary feudal services. As the cities in Italy, and especially in Lombardy, grew richer and more powerful, and the Emperors of the house of Franconia less able, owing to their troubles with their vassals in Germany, to maintain their feudal rights in Italy, there grew up, particularly in Milan, a determined spirit of resistance to these claims of the Emperor. When the family of Swabia or Hohenstauffen succeeded that of Franconia, Frederick Barbarossa determined to coerce these cities into obedience, and in 1154 he crossed the Alps with a large army and was crowned King of Lombardy at Pavia. Frederick seems to have been a sort of Imperial Hildebrand, and with as high an idea of the soundness of his title to be the world-monarch as that haughty Pontiff had of his own to supreme rule. This temper guided him both in his dealings with the Pope and with the rebellious cities of Lombardy. He insisted that "the Imperial crown was independent, and he ascribed his possession of it to the Divine goodness only."

With these notions of his prerogative, he proceeded to show how much he was in earnest in his intention of

exercising it, not only by attacking Milan, which had refused to recognize his feudal sovereignty and render the tribute due, but, after gaining possession of the city, by utterly destroying it, levelling its buildings to the ground, and giving the inhabitants only eight days to remove from its territory. The cities of Lombardy were for a time stunned by this terrible blow, but they soon recovered, and, on some reverses of the Emperor occurring, formed a league to oppose him, called the Lombard League, to which nearly all the great cities of Northern Italy adhered, and set about rebuilding Milan and defying the Emperor. In this they were aided by the Pope, Alexander III., and a memorable and decisive battle was fought between this league of Lombard cities and the Emperor at Legnano in 1176, in which the Emperor was completely defeated. This battle I call memorable, for it is the first instance in the history of the Middle Age in which municipalities joined together in successful resistance to one of the great sovereigns of Europe ; and it was decisive not merely because the result was, after some years, the permanent establishment of the municipal freedom of these great towns, but also because it was the principal cause of the end of that German domination in Italy which had continued, practically unbroken, from the time of Charlemagne. The Hohenstauffens became extinct on the death of the brilliant Frederick II., grandson of Barbarossa, and his son, whose heroic deeds are more particularly connected with the history of Italy than with that of Germany. After

their death the German Emperors ceased any more to vex that country on the plea that they were the successors of Charlemagne, and, as such, world-monarchs. How far the unity and progress of Germany were retarded by the efforts of its rulers for nearly five centuries to secure the possession of Italy, and by their expending the resources of Germany on that object, it is not easy to say. The policy which persistently wasted so much and gained so little seems to most modern historians a fatal one.

The confusion and anarchy in Germany on the extinction of the house of Hohenstauffen were so great that a considerable period elapsed, called the Interregnum (1254–1272), before the nobles in that country could find any one with serious qualifications for the office of Emperor. After the reigns of several Emperors of the Houses of Luxemburg and Bavaria, they chose for that office Rudolph of Hapsburg, who did not belong to any one of the ruling families of the ancient tribes. He held extensive fiefs in Swabia, Switzerland, and Alsace, and by choosing him Germany was spared at least from those wars of rival families which had brought so much misery upon the land. The first need of the time was the restoration of public order ; and Rudolph was chosen with the hope of attaining that object. How much it was needed is shown by the story that he earned, when a private nobleman, the gratitude and confidence of the Archbishop of Mentz by escorting him in safety through Southern Germany and the passes of Switzerland on a journey to Rome, whither he was forced to go to receive

from the Pope the *pallium*, the proper symbolical investiture of his see. As the Archbishop was one of the Electors of the Emperor, his influence in securing the election of Rudolph was all-powerful, and proved successful; but what a strange picture of the lawless state of society is that of the Primate of Germany unable to go to Rome to secure his office without the constant protection of a powerful noble, whose fidelity to his promise seemed as much a cause of wonder as of gratitude!

Rudolph made no attempt, as his predecessors had done, to reduce his great vassals in Germany to feudal obedience. Their fiefs had long been hereditary, and their chiefs were practically sovereign, with a mere nominal dependence upon the Emperor; and he was content so to leave them. His object was to restore order: in doing so he determined that the law of brute force should cease throughout Germany. He subdued the robber-knights, who in those evil times did not hesitate to plunder peaceful traders; and with the same object in view he placed the powerful King of Bohemia under the ban of the Empire, defeated him in a great battle, 1276, and, with the consent of the nobles, took possession of the districts of Austria, Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, and erected them into an Imperial fief, which he gave to his sons, and thus founded the territorial dominion of his descendants, the reigning house of Austria, in the present Archduchy and its dependencies. The Imperial name and authority seem to have

lost all their early *prestige* in this family, presenting no longer to men's minds a grand conception of universal monarchy having for its ideal object the securing of universal right and justice, but becoming, after the loss of Italy, not even a means of making Germany strong and united, and serving as a powerful instrument of aggrandizing the dynastic interests of that Hapsburg family from which the Emperors for nearly five centuries were taken. The title of Roman Emperor and the ceremonial of the Imperial court were kept up until both were swept away by the battle of Austerlitz in 1806; but it was all an empty show: the true Empire had fallen, to rise no more, and it is hard to discover any resemblance between Charlemagne, whose Empire was only another name for the conquest of civilization, and the descendants of Rudolph of Hapsburg, who became powerful by selling the Imperial rights and jurisdictions to their subjects and by intermarriage with the richest and most powerful families of Europe.

The Electors of the Emperor, constituted such by the Golden Bull of Charles IV. (1356), were seven men of the highest dignity in the Empire, who were supposed to represent the Church and the principal ancient tribes of Germany,—the Archbishops of Mentz, of Cologne, and of Treves for the former, and the King of Bohemia, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the Count Palatine of the Rhine for the latter. The lay representation in the Electoral College was somewhat changed as time went on, but, as has been said, a

member of the house of Hapsburg was always its choice for Emperor. The Imperial office in this family ceased to be, as Voltaire says, either Holy, or Roman, or Apostolic. He who held it had neither power nor possessions as Emperor, although as Archduke of Austria he held extensive territories in Germany; and the result was that the history of that country under the Hapsburgs, down to the time of the Reformation, presents a condition of disorganization and anarchy in which public order and security were hardly more firmly settled than in the wildest license of feudal times.

The old law of force seemed again the only law. The fourteenth century, when this misrule was at its height, is the epoch of insurrections against arbitrary tyranny in Germany. The revolt of the Swabian towns, and the heroic and successful resistance of the Swiss, whose country then formed part of Germany, to the power of the house of Austria, as exhibited on the battle-fields of Morgarten and Sempach, were the first rays of light shining in a dark place. In Switzerland—and it is a significant fact—the contest was not merely for the freedom of the towns from feudal servitude, but for the independence of the country; and they secured it. During all this time there was in Germany none of that gradual unfolding and development of national life tending towards national unity observable in the history of other important countries of Europe towards the close of the Middle Age, and no mitigation of the hardships of the feudal system which bore so severely

on the rural laborers, whether serfs or villeins. In the towns, it is true, the condition was somewhat better; for the inhabitants, especially of the free cities, were in a measure able to take care of themselves.

History may be searched in vain for a better illustration of unrelieved selfishness on the part of the rulers than that observable in the two hundred and fifty years in Germany preceding the Reformation. There seemed to be but one subject upon which all, Emperor and vassal, were agreed, and that was a detestation of the pretensions of the Pope to interfere with the civil power in Germany, to which, perhaps, may be added a desire on all hands to weaken even the supreme ecclesiastical authority hitherto conceded to him. The Council of Constance, held in 1414 and presided over by the Emperor, was the last occasion on which Latin Christendom acted as one commonwealth under a recognized chief, and was called in order to settle the claims of rivals to the papacy and to reform the crying abuses of the Church. Although it declared, delegates from all the Christian countries being present, that the decision of a General Council was of superior authority to that of the Pope, yet it maintained its orthodoxy, nevertheless, by condemning to death John Huss and Jerome of Prague as heretics, and encouraged the Emperor, as the armed champion of the orthodox faith, to attack Bohemia, their country, with a large army, and to exterminate their followers. This was a task, it may be said, in which the German princes joined with the Emperor in undertaking

with much greater alacrity than they did in that of resisting the advance of the Ottoman Turks, who in 1456 marched towards Germany up the valley of the Danube, and who were driven back not by Germans with their Emperor at their head, but by the valor and conduct of a monk and of an Hungarian nobleman.

This is not the place to speak of the ecclesiastical abuses prevalent in Germany, from which the population suffered quite as much, but in a different way, as from the misrule and disorganization of the civil power. The special iniquities for which the Church was held responsible, whether justly or not, contributed with the frightful tyranny and exactions of the feudal lords to produce a general condition of discontent, which rapidly grew into an intense craving for change, and every favorable opportunity for revolt was embraced, as was seen generations afterwards in the eagerness with which the anti-papal doctrines of the Reformation were adopted, and in the violent outbreak contemporaneous with it known as the Peasants' War. The rapid revolutionary character of this movement in Germany was unlike that produced by the spirit of change elsewhere. The reason is not far to seek. The great forces which sooner or later in each country brought about that great change, called the Renaissance, which marks their transition from mediæval to modern history, such as the invention of printing and of gunpowder, the discovery of America, and the revival of the study of the Greek literature, were met by obstacles very different and much more formidable in the



condition of German society than those which they encountered in other parts of Europe. At that time France, under Louis XI., had at last become a nation in reality, as well as in name, by the annexation of all the great fiefs to the crown. In England the Wars of the Roses were ended, forever destroying the overgrown power of the great nobles, and rendering the Tudors the most absolute of English sovereigns. Even in Spain a great nation had been created by the union of the crowns of Castile and of Aragon. But in Germany the feudal system, the type of an unprogressive state, still survived, and there was no power which could so mould the results of the recent triumphs of mind over matter as to strengthen and develop the true national life. Whatever Germans may have done in the work of the world as a race from the time of Rudolph of Hapsburg to that of the French Revolution was done in spite of their governments, while local separatism and rival jealousies between different parts of the Fatherland have been the main causes of its weakness.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### SAXON AND DANISH ENGLAND.

THE early history of England has, for many reasons, special interest for the American student. In the first place, it is the history of an important period in the life of our own race. Whatever relates to the origin of a life so distinct and peculiar, the growth of which has resulted in building up a national type wholly unlike any other in history, concerns us as much to know as if we were modern Englishmen. Besides, we must possess some knowledge of early English history in order that we may understand the full meaning and historical growth of our own national life as a people of English blood and speaking the English language.

Of all the progressive civilizations of the world, that of the English race is essentially an historical civilization,—that is, one in which every change is the outgrowth of a previous condition. The proudest boast of an Englishman is, that his claim to certain fundamental personal rights rests upon the ancient and undoubted right and privilege of the people of the realm, and especially that his title to the enjoyment of these rights is derived from prescription and immemorial usage, the date of their origin being expressed by the legal phrase, “a period during which the memory of man runneth

not to the contrary." On the Continent, especially during the last hundred years, the old age of an existing political institution has been regarded as a defect rather than as a merit; its historical life has been sacrificed without hesitation if it did not fulfil the conditions of improvement formulated by some newly-announced philosophical theory supposed to be of universal application. The English, on the contrary, in spite of the temptation held out to induce them to adopt these general political truths for the practical uses of government simply because they were true, and in spite of the example of the nations on the Continent, have clung obstinately to their old ways, simply, it would seem very often, because they were old. This has been due not merely to a greater caution on the part of Englishmen in making changes for fear of evil results, but also to the English mind having been so constituted and trained that in politics, at least, there has always been an inborn belief, which has grown with the growth of the race, that everything worth preserving in their system has an historical basis. It believes that permanent political institutions are not made, but grow, and that while as time goes on, and the condition of the world changes, some modifications of the superstructure may be permitted, yet the foundations must always be embedded in the historical life of the nation.

The English Constitution, of which we hear so much, is merely a collection of historical precedents, and for that reason it is held in highest reverence; and the common

law, which is only another name for immemorial usage, strange to say, is called in England the perfection of human reason. In a very important sense, then, Englishmen are almost fanatics concerning the value of the lessons taught by their own history as guides for their present action : whatever growth or evolution there may be in their system must proceed on its own lines, and not be the result of forces which have been strangers to their national life. Their ideal is strength, not congruity or harmony in accordance with general political theories. Their Gothic structure, in their own estimation, even if it lacks some modern conveniences, serves to shelter them, and they proudly point to its strength and durability as its chief merit, unwilling to run the risk of change merely to make its rugged exterior conform to the laws of harmony, symmetry, and proportion, as understood elsewhere.

In this country there is not much danger of our adopting conservative or cast-iron ideas in regard to the movement of life around us, and maintaining them, according to the English practice, simply because they are old and are supposed, therefore, to be well tried. Our fault is perhaps the opposite one, that we give all new ideas a too easy and generous hospitality, and that we are only too ready to try experiments. But we can no more get rid of English precedents, upon which our system, equally with theirs, is based, or the habits which they have fostered, than we can get rid of our English speech or of our English blood. It would be very

undesirable if we could do so, for, whatever we may owe to other influences, that which is most characteristic of us, that which has formed the element of toughness and strength which has made us triumph where weaker nations have fallen, is unmistakably a political education due to English origin and English growth. These are some of the reasons which should induce Americans to study English history, and especially its growth from the earliest times. In a very important sense such a study is the study of our own history, going down, as it were, into the very depths from which all English-speaking people have been taken, and exploring them to find out how the English race has been able to do so large a work in the world's history.

But such a study has even a nearer and more special interest for us. The three great characteristic facts of American history at present evolved are these: 1. The fusion of a great variety of races over a vast continent, and that in a comparatively short time, not merely into one nation, but into one civilization, and the predominance of English law and English ideas over all others as the result of that fusion. 2. A general respect and obedience to law, as such, throughout the country, with all the restraining influence which such a habit imposes. 3. The establishment of a government federative in its form, but national in its power. Our experience in regard to the first of these two characteristic facts or outgrowths of our condition is merely

a repetition of the course of early English history, only, of course, upon a much larger scale. England is made up, as our country has been, by a fusion of races, the Anglo-Saxon element with her, as with us, always predominant. She has had to combine, as we have done, for the full development of her national life, Celts with Romans, Saxons with Scandinavians, Teutons with Latins. Like ourselves, she has known how to make them members of the same family, and in this lies her strength. How she did it we shall hope to tell, and the study of the process is full of practical lessons for us.

In a previous chapter we have explained how this process of assimilation which took place in all the nations which had originally formed portions of the Roman Empire, and which were invaded by the German tribes, was accomplished in certain portions of the Continent. In France its final outcome was centralization and despotism; in Germany, feudal separatism and weakness; in England, after a long struggle, liberty founded on law. The mere fusion of a number of tribes into a homogeneous people upon the same territory, with the recognized leadership of that one among them which had shown itself most powerful, seems at first a very simple matter, almost insignificant as a force affecting the general current of civilization; and yet history tells us that England and the nations on the Continent differ as they do because this force was so differently applied in these different countries. And

so with that second characteristic fact of our civilization, the habit of reverence for law as such, and the self-restraint which that habit imposes,—this too comes to us from England as our most precious inheritance; and perhaps the most valuable practical lesson we learn when we study English history is the manner in which this habit grew up even among the wild tribes who contended there in early times for the mastery, and how, once fixed in the English character, it has saved them, as it saved us and all English-speaking people, from the excesses of revolutionary force and violence which have usually characterized the struggles for change in Continental countries.

We must confine ourselves chiefly to seeking out the characteristics of the English race as shown in their earlier history which have been more or less reproduced in our own national life and history, and explaining their applications. England, as we know, was brought to the knowledge of the Roman world by the invasion of Cæsar, B.C. 55. He found there a population of fierce barbarians, whose resistance to his invasion was as obstinate as it was unexpected, and he wisely decided that his project for the conquest of the island at that time should be given up. For nearly a hundred years no further attempt was made by the Romans to subdue and occupy the country. The tribes which then inhabited it were Celtic, and the strongest, perhaps the only, bond which united them was their religion. Of this, the chief officers and priests were called Druids, who

at the same time were their bards who celebrated their heroic exploits in war ; and to the Romans at least their religion and the influence of the Druids were inseparably associated with the obstinate defence of the country against their arms. But we know almost nothing of these primitive people. We must not rest on Mr. Tennyson's fascinating pictures of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table as trustworthy sources of information, for history tells us little about them. Their chief interest to us lies in their relations with their Roman conquerors, and we are curious to know how and in what way the assimilating power of Roman civilization during four centuries affected them.

The final conquest took place under the Emperor Claudius in A.D. 61. The natives in their despair showed, in the defence of their country, the most determined courage, and Caractacus, or Caradoc, and Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, as their leaders, are among the foremost of the early English heroes. But no nation or tribe in the older world could withstand for a long period the irresistible force of the Roman arms. The Celtic Britons were no exception, and after a most obstinate resistance they too became Romanized, after the manner adopted by the Empire in conquered districts. The Roman occupation was organized ; in other words, their military rule was arranged according to the uniform pattern. Two prefects representing the Emperor were appointed for the government of the country,—the one residing at London, the other at York. The first care



of the Romans upon the occupation of a conquered country was the making of roads which brought their military posts into easy communication. In the second century three legions were stationed in England,—one, each, at York, at Chester, and at Caerleon-on-Usk, on the borders of Wales. Accordingly, one great road, called Watling Street, extended from London to Chester northwesterly, another led immediately north from London to York, another through the Eastern counties to Cambridge and Lincoln, and still another westward from London to Bath. There was also a road from the coast to London by way of Canterbury. Roman military stations were found in other parts of the country which are important in history as the *nuclei* of future towns and cities, and as centres from which civilization gradually radiated into the surrounding country, a large portion of which at that time was made up of dense forests and impenetrable morasses. A motley array of traders and camp-followers grew up around these military stations, which soon became colonies in which the life and manners were wholly Roman. In them were soon to be found those invariable accompaniments of Roman civilization,—the bath, the forum, and sometimes, in the most important of them, the amphitheatre.

During the Roman domination some of these towns became, after the Roman pattern, *municipia*, and, in subordination to the central government, self-governing. They had their prefects, their *scabini*, their *curiales*, as in other portions of the Empire, who performed duties

in these cities similar to those which I have described as devolving on officers of the same name in the Roman cities in Gaul. It is important for us to remember that these city governments were the predecessors, and in a certain sense the models of the organization, of the municipal corporations of modern times, with their mayor, aldermen, and common council. The life of the Roman camps, out of which these cities grew, was not without great influence upon their subsequent history. They became fortresses, and as such capable of protecting their inhabitants, and centres of knowledge, wealth, and power, able to preserve in the worst of times the traditions at least of local self-government. In the time of the Roman domination they were governed by the Roman law, which, bad as it was as far as the liberty of the citizen was concerned, was at any rate better than the barbarism which ruled the country districts, peopled by the wild Celts, around them. These cities were at least training-schools for a larger and more liberal public life.

When the Romans left the country, the framework of their organization of city life at least remained. The meetings of the *curia* became gradually transformed into the Saxon *gemotës*, where some rude principle of representation was recognized; and the Roman *basilica* became the Saxon guildhall, in which the judge and jury were substituted for the Roman *Judex*, who was both the interpreter of the law and the judge of the facts. Many of these towns became, during the Roman

occupation, comparatively important manufacturing places. The peace which the Roman rule enforced favored trade and commerce. The mines of iron, tin, and lead were worked to great advantage; and we must infer that the country produced immense supplies of food when we read that under the Emperor Julian (A.D. 358) eight hundred vessels were employed in the corn trade between the English coast and the Roman colonies on the Rhine.

There was constant intercourse, of course, between the military colonists of the towns and the native population of the country districts, and possibly some intermarriages; yet it is a curious fact that outside of these towns the Roman language, religion, and law seemed to have had no power of assimilation with the native growth, nor have we any evidence that any was attempted. We must look to a later period in English history, and as a result of a later conquest, for the incorporation into its life of that Latin culture by which it became at length so enriched. Great as was the Roman power during its domination in Britain, it is somewhat surprising, when we remember that it lasted nearly four centuries, to find that it did not leave deeper and more enduring marks on the life of the country. To sum up, the occupation of Britain by the Romans, as it has been well said, was, like the French colonization of Algeria, chiefly an occupation for military purposes, and hence it never took any very deep root in the soil. The government was military for the Roman legions and the

country districts, and municipal for the large towns ; the conquerors were unsympathetic and hard ; and thus it is, perhaps, that we have not now a Romanized England, as we have a Romanized France and Spain.

The Roman military occupation of Britain ceased in 410, when the troops stationed there were withdrawn in order to defend Italy against the threatened invasion of the Goths and Burgundians. The country soon fell into the possession of numerous native chiefs with a very feeble bond of union between them, and in this condition its rulers were forced to withstand the formidable inroads of the Picts, who were merely native Britons who had been driven by the Roman conquest to take refuge in the Highlands of Scotland. They were in league with a tribe of marauders from Ireland, strangely enough then called Scoti. The story of Vortigern and of the beautiful but faithless Rowena, and of Hengist and Horsa, may be apocryphal in some of its details, but there can be no doubt that the rulers of Britain, whoever they were, in 449 resolved, in their weakness, to call in the aid, for the defence of the country against these Picts and Scots, of those whom we have been in the habit of calling Anglo-Saxons, but who are now spoken of as *par excellence* English. These Anglo-Saxons were of the same race as the Northmen, then known in England only as pirates or sea-rovers, with a high reputation for that sort of military skill which rests upon reckless bravery and love of adventure. These warriors, who at different times

assailed different portions of the English coast, proved on their arrival, as might have been expected, conquerors rather than allies of the people who had invited them to assist in the defence of their country against its internal enemies. Surely and steadily, if slowly, they drove back the native Britons, resolving to occupy the country permanently, and striving to blot from its surface every trace of the two peoples who had previously possessed it, even going so far, it is said, as to remove the Roman mile-stones from the roads.

Who, then, were these English, now so called, who marked their advance into the country afterwards called by their name with such devastation? They were Saxon tribes, of the Teutonic race, from the shores of the German Ocean, settled in the territory between the rivers Elbe and Weser, and, like all the tribes of the North at that period, they had gained their power by the renown attached to their achievements as sea-rovers. But their conquest of England shows that they were as formidable in the use of their military power on land as at sea. The advance-guard of these tribes was called Jutes, and their point of attack was Kent, the south-eastern county of England. This they soon subdued and erected it into a Jutish kingdom, with Canterbury as its capital. A few years later, another band of marauders, Saxons, took possession of the territory west of Kent and established what was afterwards known as the kingdom of Sussex, or the South Saxon country. Still later, another tribe, under the command of Cerdic

and Cymric, landed at Southampton, and, although their progress into the interior was delayed by a terrible defeat which they suffered at the hands of the celebrated British prince Arthur, they succeeded in founding the Saxon kingdom of Wessex, or of the West Saxons. This was the most extensive in point of territory which the invaders had yet established, and it was destined, under a succession of able kings, to gain for a time at least the supremacy or overlordship of all the Saxon settlements in England. Still later, the Saxons in Germany, emboldened by the success of their countrymen in the south of England, landed on the east coast and took possession of the country, penetrating far into the interior both on the north and south of the river Humber, carrying devastation wherever they went, naming the lands on the north of that river Northumbria, and those to the south East Anglia, while the territory to the west was called Mid Anglia, or Mercia, or the Mark. These seven kingdoms were formerly called the Saxon Heptarchy; but later researches have shown that there was in reality no common government among them, and that the superiority of Wessex at one time or of Mercia at another was due to the greater force of one or the other kingdom for the time being. So slowly and gradually did the successive occupation of the various Saxon tribes take place in England, that a hundred and fifty years elapsed before the conquest was finally completed. The settlement of the country after this conquest has usually been considered as forming the true foundation of English

life as we know it in modern times. It was a genuine transplantation of Teutonic Saxondom into English soil, and neither age nor *environment* has destroyed its vital energy. We must study, therefore, the nature of the original seed, and of the soil to which it was removed. We shall find in it the germ of much that is characteristic of our modern English and American life.

The Saxons, in their native country, and long after they took up their abode in England, dwelt in what are called "*village communities*," in which each family possessed a homestead. These villages were surrounded by the *mark*, or *gau*, or, in more modern language, the common, which was the undivided property of the families in the village, and was cultivated by them for their common benefit in certain proportions as decided by the assembly, or *witan*, composed of the heads of the families. Here were also settled all questions affecting the community. These communities were bound together as families, and not as individuals, the family being responsible for the acts of each of its members; and it received, in like manner, the compensation paid for wrong and injury done to any one of them. The North Germans were always farmers when not engaged in warlike expeditions. I have explained how strong were the efforts made by the first of the Saxon Emperors, Henry the Fowler, to induce the tribesmen to live in cities and not in small villages scattered through the country, and how important his success in the measures he took for that purpose has been considered as

promoting civilization in Germany. So, in England, the Saxon invaders, for a long time, shunned residence in the Roman cities. They preferred their village organization, which, with tithings, or districts of ten families, hundreds, with a hundred families each, and shires, with a certain number of hundreds, continued, with various well-defined powers, responsibilities, and duties annexed to them, far into the Middle Age.

The Saxon invaders were coarse feeders and hard drinkers, and, in order to live in the climate and with the scant resources supplied by nature, they were forced to become steady and persistent workers, at least in time of peace. They are said to have been domestic in their habits, and to have been fond of their wives and children. Whether this was due to the climate, which forbade outdoor amusements, as Mr. Taine says, or to their having looked upon their women, as Tacitus says, as possessing something of divine qualities and to be revered accordingly, I cannot undertake to decide: however this may be, we are to look upon the peculiar English idea of home, with its incalculable influence in history upon the national character, as based very much upon the ancient Anglo-Saxon's love of his hearth-stone. In England and in the best English literature the wife and the mother are the highest types of womanhood; in more southern and Latin countries a totally different type of woman is recognized as the most exalted,—one which the imagination invests with grace and elegance and passion, very unlike that of the perfect English or American woman.



There were three classes of men among the Anglo-Saxons in their own country,—the noble, the common freeman, and the slave; and this fundamental organization of the whole Teutonic, I may say of the whole Aryan, world, they brought with them into England when they came as conquerors, and it formed the basis of their settlement there. As this was perhaps the most indestructible of all their political institutions, and as it has been more fruitful than any other in moulding their ideas of government, not only in England but among all English-speaking people, ourselves included, we must examine it with some care.

In the Saxon tongue these three classes were named Ealdormen, Ceorls or Churls, and Serfs, and they have been perpetuated in the English Constitution and language, as lords and commons and mere laborers, under various names. The ealdormen were nobles by birth, and generally the leaders in war. Their functions are supposed to have resembled those performed by the officer named by the Romans of the later Empire *Dux*. In addition to these officers, there was one above all, named King, whose title seems to have depended partly upon the popular belief of his descent from Odin and partly upon his election by the tribe. He was not necessarily a leader in war, and his person, being invested with a certain sort of reverence due to his divine lineage, was regarded as inviolable. This inviolability of the monarch is a provision of the English Constitution which has characterized it in all history. Legally “the

king could do no wrong ;” and therefore his advisers, and not himself, were responsible for the acts of government. I say legally, by which I mean that under ordinary circumstances he was irresponsible, according to the fundamental Teutonic conception of monarchy ; but there never was a period in English history in which the right to depose a king for cause was not asserted and maintained by the body claiming to represent at the time the people in the last resort, whether that body was called Witan, or Parliament, or Convention,—whether the alleged offence was, as the early English would have said, incompetency, or, as the men of 1688 proclaimed, because the king had broken by his acts the original contract between himself and his people. Six times in the last nine hundred years has the Great Council of the nation made use of this power of deposition.

Of the greater nobles there soon grew to be two classes, whom it is necessary to distinguish. The Ealdormen were nobles by birth and hereditary descent ; the Thanes, as the other class was called, were men of gentle birth, who attached themselves to the service of the king as warriors,—*commended* themselves, as the expression was,—and, having distinguished themselves in war, were rewarded by the kings generally with grants of land, which gradually became so numerous that this class became a distinct order, called Knights, whose estates were held upon condition of rendering military service for these lands. Out of this arrangement gradually grew the feudal system, the relation of lord and vassal having,

after the Norman conquest, universally replaced both that of military patronage and that of those whose position depended upon their birth. The *witenagemot*, or assembly of the wise and noble, decided in England, as it had done in Germany, all questions of importance to the tribes composing the nation. The *shiregemot*, or assembly of the shire or county, was rather a judicial tribunal or court than a deliberative body. It met several times a year, administering justice in accordance with the laws, and punishing crime committed within its limits. It was probably the most powerful instrument of local self-government of those days, and as such it, or something resembling it, has been preserved in the political organization of all English-speaking peoples.

Trial by jury, as we know it now, was not one of the early English institutions, although it has been asserted that provision was made for it in the laws of King Alfred. The mode of settling disputed questions of fact was at first by means of *compurgators*; that is, in cases of doubt a certain number of a man's neighbors were permitted to declare that they believed his statement of his case to be correct, and this was held to be conclusive. While this shows the value attached to personal character by the early English law, the system of frank-pledge, by which the community in which a man lived became responsible for his wrong-doings, is an illustration of that *solidarité* of interests between the individual and the society of which he was a member which our modern enthusiastic reformers have vainly

striven to realize. Like all Teutonic tribes, they seem to have had little conception of crime as a moral offence,—a feeling which prevailed after they embraced Christianity, because it was supposed that the Church should take exclusive cognizance of the moral aspect of the case,—and all offences, save those of the gravest kind, were compounded for by the payment of a sum to the sufferer or his relatives, graded according to the rank of the offender or of his victim.

The Saxon conquerors no doubt distributed among themselves, first, the enclosed and cultivable land of the country, having, of course, confiscated any title of its previous holders. These lands were all charged with the burden of the *trinoda necessitas*, a triple obligation or tax to the State, consisting of money enough to construct the roads, to build fortresses, and to provide for the military defence. Feudal tenures, at least in the strictest sense, were not yet: there were lands belonging to the State and called *ager publicus*, or *folkland*, held in reserve for future public uses, which might be leased by the king, or conferred as rewards for services, but which could not be absolutely alienated without the consent of the *witan*.

Such are a few of the more striking characteristics of the constitution of the early English political organization; and, considering that the chief occupation of the tribes was war with each other and with their Danish invaders for nearly five hundred years, and the prevailing habits of lawless violence engendered by these wars,

it shows the toughness of the fibre of the race, and its historical instincts, if I may so express myself, that their civil laws should have remained through all chances and changes the basis of modern English jurisprudence, just as the Anglo-Saxon tongue has been the enduring foundation of our modern English language. This has been due in a great measure to the process of the fusion of races which has been going on during the whole course of English history, and which has resulted, often after a struggle of centuries, but always in the end, in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon element. A few words about two of the earliest of these fusions, which helped to bring the whole territory of England under one rule.

The first of these attempts to establish a common English family was by the fusion of the Saxons with the Angles, who had been neighboring tribes in Germany. In England the first occupied the southern and western portions, the other the northern and eastern portions, of the country. While they were both Teutonic tribes, each spoke a dialect unknown to the other, and there was a slightly different organization in their society. The northern province at least was Christian, while the population of the Saxon kingdoms was Pagan, and they were both alike fierce, warlike, and ambitious. After many wars, the details of which, as Milton says, would interest us as much as the "stories of the battles of the kites and crows," the overlordship of the seven kingdoms, forming what used to be called

the Saxon Heptarchy, fell first to Mercia, the Midland kingdom, and after the death of Offa, the king of that country, Mercia was assailed by Egbert, the King of the West Saxons, and completely subdued by him. This was in the year 827 ; a few years after, Egbert invaded Northumbria, or the district north of the Humber, and reduced that country also to his obedience, so that the result was that he ceased in 828 to be merely King of Wessex, and became thenceforth nominal ruler of the whole English territory, from the Channel to the Firth of Forth. He then assumed the title of King of the English, the rulers of the kingdoms composing it acknowledging him as overlord.

This is an important epoch in the history of the country, for it marks the period when it came, for the first time since the retirement of the Romans, even nominally, under the sway of one ruler. No sooner had this result been achieved, and the population of the country had become, in name at least, English, than they were called upon to resist the most formidable invasion by which they had yet been attacked. These new invaders came not merely to make raids and to plunder, but to occupy permanently the country. They were of that same indomitable race of Northmen whom we recognize as the race *d'élite* of the Middle Age, whom we find moving in triumph through all parts of Europe, conquering all the various races with whom they came in contact, as if to teach us what skill and valor and enterprise may do in the work of this world. Those who invaded

England were among the fiercest and most cruel of their race, and they were urged on by a thirst of revenge for the wrongs which they alleged the Saxons had done them, as well as by the ordinary motive for such incursions,—the love of plunder. Having occupied Northumbria, and mastered the Anglian parts (the eastern and middle) of England, they marched towards the Saxons of Wessex, whose king at that time was the celebrated Alfred the Great. For seven years the war continued without any decisive results, Alfred being often reduced to the greatest straits to preserve his own life, while the enemy overran his country. At last a battle was fought, resulting in such a victory of the Saxons that a treaty (that of Wedmore) was concluded between King Alfred and the Danes in 878, by which the territory of England was divided between them, the line of demarcation being roughly the old Roman Watling Street, extending, as I have said, in a north-westerly direction, from London to Chester. The most important result of this treaty was that the Danish chiefs consented to embrace Christianity, doubtless yielding after the manner of the victims of the conversions of Charlemagne on the Elbe. The treaty gave, however, a certain period of quiet to that part of the country ruled by Alfred, and it was during this period that this great king proved himself as remarkable for his political capacity as he had previously shown himself illustrious as a warrior.

The reign of Alfred is too large a subject to dwell

upon here. It has been the habit to ascribe in times gone by all that was good in England in the Saxon era to the influence of the laws of Alfred. Later investigations hardly confirm this view. The king, like many other great men, seems to have been a good deal of a theorist: his code appears hardly opportune or suited to the needs of the rough, hard times of that age. He was a philosopher rather than a statesman; although one of his schemes—that of the creation of a navy as the proper means of defending an island like England from foreign invasion—was one of the most far-sighted and practical ever adopted by an English law-giver. The fusion of English and Dane was very far from completed. Under the successors of Alfred, Danes and Northmen from France were the rulers of the country for many generations afterwards. But beneath this outward rule the leaven of the English spirit was never wanting to leaven the whole mass with the characteristic English traits, and the very struggles which it was forced to make to assert itself gave precision to its aims and served to broaden the basis of the English nationality. During the rule of the Danes and of the early Norman kings, when the native English seemed, to outward appearance, wholly conquered, they were really, as subsequent history proves, always gaining strength, and making ready to assert their claim to a share in the government of their conquerors, until at last they became strong enough to make their own characteristic life predominant in its policy and administration and permanent in its influence.



But I have said nothing yet of the most potent agency of the fusion of the different races inhabiting England previous to the Norman conquest: I mean the organization of the Christian Church. This, more than anything else, in the end, made Britons and Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans, one people, in religion, at least, and brought them under the same form of government, into those relations with the rest of Christendom which made England part of the great Christian commonwealth and enabled her to take a prominent place in the general movement of European progress. How far Christianity was introduced into England in the time of the Celtic Britons, or of their successors the Romans, is a disputed question. If it prevailed at all previous to the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the country, it was certainly rooted out by them; for the invaders—Anglo-Saxons—were fierce Pagans. Some time during the Anglo-Saxon occupation of England Christianity made great progress in Ireland, which was, owing to its geographical position, the refuge of scholars in those days. Many saints flourished there, and many famous monasteries, schools, and churches were established. One of the Irish monks, Columba, crossed to Scotland with the object of converting the Picts, and on the western coast, in the island of Iona, founded a celebrated monastery, which became a sort of mother-house for missionaries who preached the faith as far as Northumbria, in England. In this kingdom they had great success in converting its king, Oswald, and they established their

headquarters at a monastery on an island near Whitby called Lindisfarne, the Holy Isle. These monks followed the rule of Columba and of Iona, and not that of the Church of Rome. Meantime, Pope Gregory the Great, A.D. 597, had sent his famous mission under Augustine and his monks to convert the Saxon kingdoms of the south of England to Christianity, and to endeavor to bring not only them, but those in the north also who had been converted by the Irish monks, to the Roman obedience, by establishing if possible in England the Roman Church organization. The mission was a most difficult and delicate one, and it was long before its object was gained. The Pope had appointed as the Archbishop of York, Wilfrith, who was unceasing in his efforts to bring the Christians of Northumbria and those of the south of England under a common rule. These efforts continued for more than sixty years, and their success was retarded by wars between the two sections, and by a common heathen enemy, Penda, King of Mercia; but at last the Synod of Whitby was held in 664, where the nominal question of discussion between the two Churches was as to the proper time of celebrating Easter, but where the real issue was a far more important matter,—the importance of which it is, indeed, not easy to exaggerate,—whether the Pope or the monks from Iona should have the supreme rule in the Church of England. It was settled in that synod that Christ had given the power of the keys to Peter, and not to Columba. The king thereupon determined to submit

to the Pope, and not to the successors of the Abbot of Iona.

This most momentous decision was soon followed by the appointment of a Greek monk, Theodore of Tarsus, to be Archbishop of Canterbury, who divided the country into dioceses, with bishops subordinate to him. I call this decision momentous, not merely because in a time of wild lawlessness it settled that the religion of England should have the same form and organization of Christianity, but also because it adopted that form which had then become common to the rest of Western Europe and of which the Pope was the head. Such an organization, as I have said, proved, in the hands of the able men who were successively put in charge of it, not only the most potent agency for civilizing the nation, but, as a means to that end, for fusing into unity its discordant elements. In the Anglo-Saxon Church the bishops and the abbots of the great monasteries, which had been originally missionary foundations, were the centres of the church government. The bishop was named by the king and the *witan*. He ranked, as we should say now, as a peer of the realm, with a seat in the Great Council. The administration of the Church, both as to its revenues and as to its discipline, was in the hands of these bishops and abbots, assembled in synods. The bishops were personages of great importance, and were often called upon to take a direct part in the administration of the secular affairs of the kingdom. Their dioceses were large and their

revenues immense, and the difference between them and the ordinary mass priests, who ranked with the churls and shared their social degradation, was very great. The real power was in their hands and in those of the canons and the abbots of the monasteries.

Under the peculiar jurisprudence of the Anglo-Saxons, the whole of what may be called the correctional police of the country was in the hands of the clergy. The State might inflict fines or take away life, but only the bishop or the priest could enforce penance or seclude the criminal from the world. The practical value of this Church discipline in humanizing and civilizing the wild Saxon tribes cannot be overrated. They seem, indeed, to have had no other conception of the moral wrong of certain crimes than that they were breaches of the discipline of the Church. To them murder and theft, and keeping Easter on the wrong day, were similar offences, because they equally violated the rule of Holy Church. So with fasts, which in those days of coarse gluttony were essential to the health of the body, not to say of the soul. It would have been quite idle to preach abstinence on such grounds as these, or even on the higher ground that fasting was a duty enjoined by Christ: so that its observance was made dependent upon an order or rule of the Church, which could be enforced by penance. The clergy were the real rulers in the modern sense: in other words, they governed on some other principle than that of force, although force was never wanting to secure obedience to their discipline when

necessary. Hence they became naturally rich and powerful, and it is not surprising that we find the whole current of progress directed by them.

The representative man of the Anglo-Saxon Church, who first brought the ecclesiastical power into the service of the State, striving as a religious reformer to mitigate the abuses of the rude government of the times, was the celebrated Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury. He was born in 923, and is said to have been the trusted servant of one king, Edred, to have deprived a second, Edwy, of half of his dominions, to have established a third, Edgar, on the throne, and to have directed the policy of that sovereign and his successor, Ethelred. He is chiefly known in history as the great advocate for enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, and especially of the monks, who are said to have made the houses which were originally established as mission-stations homes for large families, and to have diverted the money which had been given to the Church for the relief of the suffering, to support them in luxurious and unbecoming living. There are two sides to this controversy, upon which I do not propose to enter now, but its chief interest to us is this, that Dunstan succeeded through the use of the power of the State in firmly establishing a rule of ecclesiastical discipline wholly at variance with the preceding practice. Of course he could not have done so had he merely exercised the ordinary power of a priest, great as it was in that age. But he was, like Cardinal Richelieu, a statesman as well as an ecclesiastic;

but, unlike the cardinal, his statesmanship was always controlled by the paramount consideration of advancing the Church by any policy he adopted.

Whatever may have been his merits or demerits, the era of peace and prosperity in England ceased for a long time after his death. The Danes soon came again to England, not to plunder this time, but to conquer and to remain, striving to make the country a member of a great Scandinavian confederacy. This proved a dream; but it is a sad truth that, beginning from the reign of Canute, the kings of England for two hundred years, with the exception of the Confessor, were foreigners,—Danes, Normans, and Angevins,—and to many it seemed that the England of Egbert and Alfred was dead and buried with the laws of Edward the Confessor.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ENGLAND AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

IN treating of English history after the Norman conquest the field before us is so wide, and the era is so marked by events of permanent interest, that I am somewhat embarrassed in the choice of topics for discussion. I can select only those which seem of conspicuous importance, and which are generally recognized as forming landmarks in English history, my purpose being chiefly to direct attention to the subjects which ought to be studied, and to suggest in what way and with reference to what historical relations they should be investigated.

For the sake of method, I shall discuss the great events in English history after the Norman conquest, as they appear to have affected the national life and growth, in four distinct ways: 1, as they illustrate the development of the political constitution of the country in the direction of freedom and self-government; 2, as affecting the relations of Church and State in that country during the Middle Age; 3, as showing the general development of the social life of that period; and, 4, as controlling the foreign and external policy of England under the Norman and Angevin or Plantagenet kings.

The Norman conquest was not probably intended by William in the beginning to produce so radical a change

in the relations of the governors and governed as he afterwards found necessary to make in order to consolidate his dominion. He claimed that he had a true title to the crown independent of any military conquest of the country, for he had been designated by Edward the Confessor as his successor, he had been recognized after the battle of Hastings by the *witan* as king, and had been duly crowned as such by the Archbishop of Canterbury. But these claims were not regarded as valid by a very large portion of the population of the northern and western portions of England: they broke out in a fierce revolt against his authority, which he maintained with overpowering force and cruelty. It was this revolt, probably, which settled the Conqueror's method of governing the country, and laid the foundation of a system which, changed as it has become by the necessities of the time through a succession of ages, still retains unmistakable marks of its Norman and feudal origin.

The possession of land was, as will be understood, the essential mark and guarantee of power during the Middle Age throughout Europe. The first step in William's reorganization of the country was the transfer of the land from the Saxon nobles to his Norman followers. In doing this, he adopted, with certain modifications, the feudal principle which then prevailed universally in the Teutonic conquests in Europe. But he seems to have been fully impressed with the defects in the feudal tenures as they had been developed on the Continent, in France especially, where the great vassals with large fiefs had



made themselves practically independent of the crown, reducing the king, as I have elsewhere shown, to the position of a merely nominal ruler in his own dominions. The Conqueror, therefore, in conferring fiefs in England, provided not merely that the donees—his *tenants in capite*, as they were called—should swear allegiance, yield military service to him, and hold their estates of him personally, as was the case elsewhere, but also that all the sub-tenants of these great feudatories should come under similar obligations to the king, as paramount lord to their own chiefs; and this was made an essential condition of the tenure of their estates by his followers. Not only this, but, with the view of still further lessening that power of the great nobles which had been employed on the Continent to embarrass and weaken the king's authority, he conferred on the same person fiefs and manors in widely distant parts of the country, so as to avoid the creation of duchies or lordships embracing a large adjacent territory held by the same person or family. In order more fully to render himself absolute master, he maintained the old Saxon plan of appointing sheriffs and of organizing courts for each county, thus reducing the local power and influence of the great land-owners to harmless proportions. His object was further accomplished by abolishing the Saxon division of the country into great provinces with a great noble at the head of each. He substituted therefor the smaller division of counties.

No one in history seems to have understood more

clearly the advantages and disadvantages of the feudal system than William the Conqueror. His object was to rule absolutely, and yet to make his followers, who had aided him in acquiring the country, satisfied,—to restrain every form of rapine and plunder except his own, and to maintain in his pay and under his control a force sufficiently large and powerful to keep his own companions and friends from undue violence. He did all this with extraordinary sagacity and with such materials as he had at hand, and he succeeded as no one on the Continent since Charlemagne had done. In no ruler was the Norman instinct of order, organization, and discipline so conspicuous. He completed his system by causing an accurate survey and census of the inhabitants and their possessions to be taken. These were compiled in the celebrated Domesday-Book, so that he and his successors were able to ascertain fully the resources at any time at their disposal. His rule was essentially military, harsh, and cruel, as was necessary to govern the rough adventurers who had followed him, and the half-subdued natives, but it at least secured the first element of all good government,—viz., public order.

His sons, especially Henry Beauclerc, had the same Norman instincts. Under him the Great Council of the Realm, composed of the greater nobles and prelates, was divided into several committees or courts, each with a distinct function,—one to revise and register the laws, one to assess and collect the revenue, another forming a court of appeal; and in a certain measure this form of

organization continues in England at the present day. The great object of the Norman and the Angevin kings seems to have been to depress the power of the baronage while making use of their military power. With this object in view, they granted important privileges to the towns on the royal demesne or king's private estates, a concession which removed them entirely from the jurisdiction of the feudal courts. Nothing is more striking as an illustration of how far the power of the nobles was curtailed in comparison with that of the same class on the Continent at the same time, than that Stephen, legally, of course, a usurper, reigned as king simply because he was supported by the city of London, and that the negotiation by which the crown was to go on his death to Henry's grandson was successfully carried out by the Archbishop of Canterbury and was not the work of the baronage.

Henry II. continued the task of reducing the feudal importance of the barons, and while, unquestionably, by so doing he increased the royal power, he also, perhaps unwittingly, improved the condition and confirmed the political rights of the *bourgeoisie*. He commuted the knights' personal service into *scutage*, a tax payable in money; and this enabled him to dispense with the military aid of the barons and their feudal retainers whenever he thought proper to do so. He could either hire, with the money produced by it, mercenary troops, or call out a general levy of the population and arm them. To him, and not to King Alfred, belongs the honor of

having established the trial by grand jury and petit jury in criminal cases as it is now known and practised by all English-speaking nations. Moreover, he established, on a basis which has never been shaken, a system of courts in which the same uniform law of the land was administered to every subject of the crown by judges appointed by the king, who made circuits of the country for that purpose. This, as may be remembered, was in striking contrast to the system prevailing in France and Germany at the same period and until long after, where each grand vassal within his own fief was sovereign not only in the enactment of the law but in its administration also. He was both law-giver and judge.

Of Henry II.'s two sons, Richard Cœur de Lion and John, the latter was the more reckless and cruel. The former was a Crusader, the chief of Crusaders, and his career and that of his great ally in the Holy Wars, Philip Augustus, may be studied with advantage by those who wish to know how far the moral enthusiasm which led the higher princes of Europe to embark in these expeditions was deep and real. John was a perfidious traitor from the beginning,—false to his father, to his brother, and to his nephew, Arthur, the son of his elder brother Geoffrey. In certain of the Norman possessions of the Kings of England, Arthur was recognized as the true heir; but John, assailing the army which maintained his nephew's pretensions in France, defeated it, captured the prince, and was accused among his contemporaries of having assassinated him. The result was

the forfeiture of his fief to the French king, the capture of Normandy and of all the other English possessions in France; and at that time they exceeded in territorial extent that portion of modern France then held by its nominal king. But John, with all the bad qualities of his race, had its courage and its tenacious spirit, and he called upon the barons and prelates of his kingdom for aid to enable him to regain his Continental possessions. They declined, on the ground that the tenures by which they held their estates did not compel them to serve the king outside the realm.

While thus struggling, he met with a new embarrassment, in the appointment of an Archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Innocent III., in violation of what he claimed to be the clear rights of his crown. On his refusing to recognize the new archbishop, one Church censure after another was inflicted upon him, until finally he was excommunicated by the Pope. In those days such a sentence had a terrible significance and power, especially in the case of an unpopular king. By it his kingdom was placed under an interdict, his subjects were released from allegiance to him, he was thus cut off even from the aid of his allies, and therefore rendered utterly powerless as a sovereign. John's position became perfectly desperate under such a ban. He was forced to bear, in addition to it, the odium of the loss of the English possessions in France, and the hatred and distrust of his own nobles, not only as a man but as an excommunicate king. In this position he decided

that the best, perhaps the only, course he could take was submission to the Pope, an act which included not merely the recognition of the archbishop who had been appointed, but an actual conveyance of his kingdom to the Pope, to be held afterwards by him and his successors, Kings of England, as a fief of the Holy See, the Pope thus becoming the overlord, and he, in due form, his liege-man. This extraordinary and desperate act seems to have led the nobles to look upon the king, who could thus barter away the crown of England, with even greater horror than they had felt when he was under the ban of excommunication or accused of the assassination of Prince Arthur. The result was a determination on their part to extort from their helpless sovereign a confirmation and guarantee of their claims to certain fundamental rights. The king was in no condition to oppose any claims they might make, so that delegates from his friends and from the nobles who were encamped in battle-array near by, in the meadows of Runnymede, met and settled in one day—July 15, 1215—the provisions of that celebrated treaty known in English history as *Magna Charta*, the Great Charter. Many of its provisions refer only to the feudal relations of the king with the barons, but others are found there of a more general application, probably through the influence of the Archbishop, Stephen Langton, the very man whose forced nomination by the Pope had been the immediate cause of the rebellion of the barons, but who proved himself on this occasion the most strenuous assertor of the constitutional

rights of all Englishmen. The provisions concerning the rights of the people in Magna Charta have made it the most memorable declaration of the principles of English liberty in its history. Magna Charta affirms, it is said, nothing new of the rights of Englishmen: it merely confirms the most important of them in the most solemn manner. Its fundamental propositions concerning government are two, and they have always been retained in England, and have been incorporated since in the codes of all English-speaking people. 1. As to personal liberty and the security of private property. "No freeman shall be seized, imprisoned, or dispossessed, save by the judgment of his peers or the law of the land." 2. As to taxation. "No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our realm save by the Common Council" (*i.e.*, Parliament) "of the realm." Magna Charta was not only a great charter, but has proved a common charter for all classes of the English people for all time. Many attempts were made by the Plantagenet kings to evade its provisions. Henry III., in his confirmation of Magna Charta, omitted the prohibition contained in it in regard to levying scutages, but he did not exact them. It was declared no less than thirty-eight times in eighty years the fundamental law of the kingdom, and Edward I. (1297), according to Hallam, ratified so fully its provisions as "to give the same security to private property as had been given to personal liberty."

The next most important development of political life in England was the provision for some proper

representation in Parliament of the lesser baronage (who may be considered the representatives of the Anglo-Saxon thanes) and of the burgesses of the towns. It was found that the excellent provisions of Magna Charta could not all be carried into practical effect, because the king and the great barons, acting through the Great Council, were not favorably disposed towards the execution of some of the most important of them. Henry III., son of John, was a vainglorious prince, whose favorites were chiefly foreigners, and these soon monopolized the most important and lucrative positions both in Church and State. They were guilty of all manner of illegal exactions, if Magna Charta was to be regarded as the standard of the law. The charter, since it was granted, had been confirmed by frequent oaths, but its provisions were in practice often disregarded, and the resentment of the barons expressed itself in a determined protest against these violations of the law, and in a refusal of further subsidies. The remedy was felt to lie in providing some sort of representation of the commonalty in the government of the kingdom. It was first proposed that the commons, the lesser baronage, and the freeholders should elect "twelve honest men" who should come to the Parliament when the king and the council sent for them to treat of the wants of the king and his kingdom. It is to be noted that the proclamation which ordered the observance of these and the like provisions adopted at Oxford was the first royal proclamation ever issued in the English



language, which is very significant as showing to which race the power of the State was then passing.

These measures caused great irritation among the higher nobles and the royal foreign favorites. They were set aside by Louis, King of France, to whose arbitrament they had been, strange to say, submitted. There was nothing left to the leader of the reform movement, Simon de Montfort, but an appeal against the king by arms. He was speedily deserted by the barons who had urged him on ; but, strong in the support of the towns, he led an army against the king, in which were arrayed fifteen thousand Londoners. He gained the great victory of Lewes in 1264, and was placed at the head of the State. True to his convictions that the remedy for the evils which afflicted the kingdom was to be found in a representation of the towns, he summoned a Parliament to which every borough was invited to send two representatives. In the previous reign, and even in that of Henry, two knights of the shire had been summoned by the king to Parliament as representatives of the lesser baronage ; but it was Simon de Montfort, the foreigner, the son of the detested leader of the crusade against the Albigenses, who first invited the merchant and the trader to sit beside the knight of the shire, the baron, and the bishop in the Parliament of the realm. He may well be called the founder of the English House of Commons. The organization which he framed continues, at least in form and name, to the present day, although in the reign

of Henry VI. the burgesses and the freeholders in the counties, who had all previously had the right to vote for members of Parliament, were debarred from that privilege unless they possessed a yearly revenue of forty shillings *per annum*. This latter provision eliminated the popular element which it was designed originally to introduce into Parliament, and has made the House of Commons ever since the representative of the property classes in the kingdom, both in trade and land, and, therefore, steady and conservative in its tone and indisposed to sudden radical changes by yielding to the popular feeling of the day.

The relations of the religious belief of the English people to their duties as subjects of the king—in other words, the growth, after the Conquest, of the strange dualism of Church and State—gave rise to some of the most memorable events in English history; and it is impossible to understand English life or English character without some study of this subject. It presents itself during the mediæval age as a constant struggle turning upon a question of divided allegiance. It was not merely a question whether, in a given case, obedience was due to the Church or the State, both claiming to be supreme powers within the realm; but also whether, in case of a collision of these powers, the supreme arbiter should be the king and the laws of the nation, or the Pope. Bitter disputes and much bloodshed grew out of honest differences of opinion on these subjects.

The Norman conquest made, of course, changes in

the details of the government of the Church in England. The Saxon bishops were dispossessed, one by one, in consequence of alleged delinquencies, and Norman prelates, generally of high character and great learning, were substituted for them. Lanfranc, a man of the greatest reputation for ability, abbot of the famous monastery of Bec, in Normandy, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. He gave a third of his revenue to the poor, worked hard on a revised text of the Scriptures, and shocked the prejudices of the vulgar by expurgating from the English calendar names of saints dear to the natives, but not accredited on the Continent. The new dignitaries in the Church, as well as in the State, were, of course, all Normans, and the differences of language and of race removed them necessarily far from their flocks. The Conqueror was disposed to curtail that practice of the interference by the clergy with civil affairs, with which the Anglo-Saxon system had been thoroughly interpenetrated, but he desired to be on good terms with the Pope, who had blessed his expedition. When that Pope, however, who was no other than the celebrated Hildebrand, Gregory VII., intimated that fealty—that is, homage made sacred by an oath—was due to him from the king for his crown, he was roughly answered that he would submit to nothing of the kind, as his predecessors had refused to recognize any such claim. The Pope, who found that he had quite a different prince to deal with from the abject penitent Henry IV. at Canossa, allowed the matter to drop.

In William's policy towards the Church we see the germ of that State supremacy asserted four centuries later by Henry VIII. He took upon himself to decide which of two rival Popes his clergy should recognize. He insisted that they should not, in council, adopt any canons which the king had not recommended or approved ; and he prohibited the excommunication of any one of his chief tenants, no matter what might have been his crime, unless the censure was inflicted by the special permission of the king. When we remember how absolute had been the control of the Church previously over the wills, the consciences, and the habits of men, we can form some conception of the effect produced by these innovations. But the influence and power of the clergy were not to be thus overthrown. From the beginning, the Norman kings tried to draw the line between the citizen and the priest, to bring England into connection with the rest of Europe and the Roman law by a reasonable submission to the Roman See, and yet keep her free from foreign control in her policy, both in the Church and State. Notwithstanding this constant uniform policy, the clergy lost no opportunity of asserting claims which we should deem very extravagant had they not been recognized as valid by the sovereigns of many of the other countries of Europe during the mediæval era. Thus, Anselm, the mildest and meekest of monks before he became the successor of his old teacher, Lanfranc, as Archbishop of Canterbury, tried to renew in England the old quarrel of the

Investitures, which had been the source of so much humiliation in Germany, involving the claim of the sovereign to invest the bishops with the episcopal office, as well as with the estates annexed to it, by the symbolical delivery of the ring and crosier. Then, again, we find Thomas Becket persisting in his denial of the jurisdiction of the civil courts over ecclesiastical persons, until his obstinacy caused his assassination. And so in the next reign we find King John forced to submit to the Pope, who had excommunicated him, and, as a proof of his sincerity, agreeing, as we have said, to hold his kingdom as a fief of the Holy See, because he found that discontented barons could defy without danger an excommunicated king. On the other hand, we find the Archbishop, Theobald, saving the country from a bloody war of succession by exerting a power which was strong enough to induce the most powerful of the nobles to consent to the succession of Stephen; and the most prominent and noblest figure, as I have said, among those who extorted Magna Charta from King John was that very Archbishop Langton whose appointment by the Pope had begun the troubles of the reign.

The great bishops of the Middle Age in England, especially under the Norman kings, were statesmen rather than Churchmen, as we now apply that term; but we must remember always that their statesmanship controlled through the machinery of the Church a vast variety of influences which now reach society by other channels. The ordinary parish priest, or mass priest

as he was called, held a very inferior position ; he was often a man of very loose character and set a bad example. There were many foreigners who held preferment in the Church who never lived in England, and who were specially hated by the people because they were non-residents. Large sums of money were annually sent to Rome as Church dues,—another subject of constant complaint. The canons and the monks formed the most respectable and influential portion of the clerical body. They would not perhaps, at the present day, be regarded as model Churchmen. Many of them had grown rich, and therefore lazy ; yet it cannot be denied that they did much good in their day. Not to speak more highly than one ought to do of the value of indiscriminate almsgiving by the monasteries, yet it had in those days its obvious uses. There can be no doubt, either, that monks were improving landlords, and concerned themselves with cattle and crops, and with maintaining large reserve granaries of food against the frequent famines, at a time when the nobles cared more to raise men-at-arms than to give their attention to such matters.

The Church became too, in those days, another name for the home of the learned professions. It was open to every promising aspirant, and men who afterwards became architects, painters, historians, and philosophers escaped from the plough or the service of arms by ministering at the altar. The Church and its worship became dear to the people as part of their daily life ; and

yet there was no blindness to its many abuses. There was always an extreme jealousy of the interference of foreigners especially, and even of the authority of the Pope himself, when he asserted his claims upon its revenues. This feeling found expression in two celebrated statutes, the one passed in 1351, the *Statute of Provisors*, which forbade the disposal of clerical livings in England by the Pope, the other passed in 1353, called the *Statute of Præmunire*, which prohibited the publication of papal bulls in England. The penalties provided for the offences prohibited by these statutes were very severe.

The Dominican friars, whose special function was public preaching, and the Franciscans, whose business it was to care for the poor,—duties which had been much neglected by the ordinary priesthood,—seemed peculiarly fitted to revive the spiritual deadness of the Church and to restore the waning affection of the people. They were established in the middle of the thirteenth century, and when they began their work in England they were most warmly welcomed, by the common people particularly, who have always been very earnest in their religious convictions, whatever they may have been. These friars did a most important work there, especially among the inhabitants of the towns. Their poverty, self-denial, and devotion to duty kept alive the religious sentiment, at the same time that it inspired the people with a bitter opposition and hatred to the official clergy,—the well-endowed monks and parish priests,—who were conspicuous by contrast for a want of zeal in their work.

This feeling increased as years went on, and prevailed indeed long after the mendicant friars had become merely impudent beggars and as careless of their proper duties as the monks and parish clergy had formerly been.

There seems to have been a general feeling of discontent in England during the fourteenth century among the commonalty, arising from a variety of causes. Before it broke out in a terrible social revolt against the misgovernment of the country and the exactions of the privileged classes, it showed itself, as is usually the case, in murmurings against the abuses of the Church. John Wyclif was the leader and representative of this movement. He was not only the earliest English Protestant in the modern sense, but also, from the impulse he gave, all the discontent of the time, from whatever source, fell into the channel of hostility to the Church. Hence, while there was no doubt a common resolve to substitute personal religion for a blind obedience to ecclesiastical authority, there was a feeling beneath it of hatred to the rule of foreign favorites, and a strong desire among the discontented to gain greater influence in their own government. This was the seed which produced not only Lollardy, but Wat Tyler's Rebellion and the Peasants' Revolt, thus making Wyclif's attempt at reforming the Church a precursor of changes affecting the whole social and political condition of the country.

The relations of England to her possessions in France during the rule of the Norman and Plantagenet kings caused always much embarrassment in the government



of the country. Their territorial extent was great, embracing the larger half of modern France, and they were made up of different provinces, each with a distinct government of its own, and all unlike that of England. The king's possessions in France embraced Normandy and Maine, the original lands of the Conqueror, Anjou and Touraine, the inheritance of the Plantagenets, and Aquitaine or Guienne, the province brought to Henry II. as a dowry when he married Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis VII. To these must be added the claim of Edward III. to the whole of France as the descendant, through his mother, of Philip IV. Every one of these claims to territory in France was disputed at different times by the rulers of that country, and the English kings were forced to defend their title to them during nearly four centuries with English blood, and with English treasure. Their nominal sovereignty over them brought little else to the English people save abundant harvests of glory reaped upon such fields as Crécy, Poitiers, and Azincour. This was a product which perhaps, after all, was more valuable in permanent results than it would seem at first sight, for out of it grew, in a great measure, that consciousness of strength which enabled the English nation, in spite of its kings, to maintain firmly those political institutions which have given the race the true mastery of the world. Yet while England had possessions in France she lacked true national life; she was in a great measure ruled by foreigners; she was always comparatively weak; and there can be no doubt

that modern England, with its marvellous power, begins to date from the close of the hundred-years' war which severed her connection with France. While that connection lasted, the policy of England was in a great measure determined by the unnatural position (if I may use such an expression) which she occupied on the Continent. Her kings, down at least to the time of Edward I., thought they best increased their power by acquiring new provinces outside of England, and the English policy was determined not so much with a view of providing for her own wants and developing her resources as for securing these foreign conquests. Perhaps anything in that day which weakened the power of the Norman and Plantagenet kings indirectly strengthened the true foundations of English liberty. A curious illustration of this is found in the effect on the nation of the loss of Normandy by King John, and of his other military disasters. Had he succeeded in recovering Normandy and in defeating the French at Bouvines, he would have been too strong for his nobles when they sought to extort Magna Charta from him; but he failed in his schemes, and the victories of the French thus became, strange to say, one of the most important conditions for securing the great charter of English liberty.

In trying to form some picture of Anglo-Norman life we must remember that the feudal system was a graded hierarchy, in which each person had a place as well ascertained and settled as that of soldiers in a regiment. The common bond of obligation between these grades was

what is technically called service, and the grade or rank of each person was determined by the nature of that service. Thus, the distinction between the gentry and the mere freeholders lay in the service of arms, and between the freeholders and the villeins in this, that the service of the first was fixed and invariable, and that of the other arbitrary and at the pleasure of the lord. These distinctions penetrated into the very core of Anglo-Norman society, and would have retarded all progress had it not been for the establishment of towns and the necessities of making changes which grew out of their peculiar life. The original town in England seems to have been a space of open country in which people gathered together for the purpose of trade, for the supply of the camp of some Roman legion or the wants of some neighboring abbey or castle. These towns alone possessed the money gained by trade which the English kings so often needed to subdue the turbulent barons or to carry on their foreign wars. Those on the royal demesne—that is, those which were on the king's private lands—soon gained for their inhabitants the right of free speech, of maintaining courts within their walls, and of meeting in arms. These were rights purchased from the king; and the vassals dependent on abbeys and castles soon after secured their freedom from feudal services in the same way.

It must not be supposed that the inhabitants of these towns were free in our modern sense. Each of the classes composing the citizens was bound to the other by a system of mutual assurance of each other's good

conduct. This was the development of the system of frank-pledge, which in Saxon times, as I have said, made each political division of the country responsible for the good conduct of all of its inhabitants. Nominally, in the towns at least, people were free to talk and free to trade, even free to bear arms at certain times ; but practically this did not mean what it might do now. "Every town and village," says a learned historian, "was bail for its inhabitants, as every lord was for his vassals. A strange comer in a village, who was neither armed, nor rich, nor a clerk, must enter and leave his host's house by daylight ; and even then he could not be harbored more than a night out of his own tithing. Twice a year the county court held a visitation to ascertain whether any fugitive serfs were within its jurisdiction. The best chance for a runaway was to take refuge in a town ; the laws would protect his life and property ; but if he had not the city franchise, or was not a member of some guild, his position was terribly at the mercy of chance. Fire, sickness, poverty, might ruin him beyond hope. It was this class, accordingly, that were the great social evil of the times, the lazars and the lepers, who died like flies in a time of pestilence, and as their true representatives and successors, the tramps, do at this day,—the canaille whom the knights and burghers trod down pitilessly." This is a dark picture of the social condition of the landless villeins of the thirteenth century, all the darker when we reflect that in those days three out of every five

Englishmen belonged to this class. Many of these towns became powerful from the riches derived from their trade and manufactures, and in them, in the pursuit of gain, no doubt the distinction between the Norman and Saxon became lost, the English language and the English customary law being the natural outgrowth of the English race which was dominant in them.

The municipal government of these towns, when they became free from feudal services, was in the hands of the burghers, as they were called, each burgher deriving his right to share in the rule from his membership in one of the trade-gildes within the town. These gildes were composed in the beginning of those engaged in the principal trades or manufactures carried on within the town, and the increase of their number was jealously guarded by the burghers, so that the municipal power might remain in the hands of the representatives of a few trades. But as the towns prospered, and other forms of industry grew up, those concerned in them, dissatisfied with the oligarchical government of the original burghers, desired to organize new gildes, representing new trades or occupations, so that they might share in the government of the town. These new gildes were known as craft-gildes, and the struggle between them and those before established, known as merchant gildes, was carried on with intense bitterness in many of these towns during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The result was, in the end, a civic revolution, by which all the gildes throughout the kingdom, whether merchant

or craft, gained an equal share in the municipal government. But this peculiar feature remained in England, as it did on the Continent, for ages, in towns that had been made free from feudal servitude, that the inhabitants as such who did not belong to the burghier class were not represented either in the government of the city or in the General Council or Parliament of the kingdom. Thus it would appear that, much as the towns did for their own emancipation from feudal tyranny, the rule of the burgher aristocracy which was substituted for it gave no share in the government, either local or general, to the mass of the population within them, and perpetuated many evils which were almost as intolerable as those inflicted by the feudal tyranny.

The parish or the manor—the administrative unit, as it afterwards became—in those days was divided into four portions. First, the lord of the fee, with his feudal rights over the whole, had a private demesne or farm, which he cultivated by his bailiff or steward; second, there were small estates possessed by the freeholders, who paid quit-rents or ground-rents to the lord; third, there were the tenements and lands of the villeins,—*bordarii* or *cottarii*, as they were called; and, fourth, the waste or common land, relic of the earliest Teutonic organization, upon which all the tenants had the right of pasture. The lands of the villeins were legally held at services arbitrarily determined by the lord, but in point of fact these services were generally commuted for a money payment by the tenant accepted by the lord. These customary

payments in lieu of services added very much to the income of the lords, and they would have looked upon any project which might deprive them of this portion of their revenue with alarm. It is curious to observe that such should have been the actual relation of the villeins to their lords at the very time when legally they were slaves, and bound to render to them all their labor without compensation. It is most important also to remember that the social discontent in England which broke out in the formidable revolts of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade was not due either to scarcity of food or to the reduction of the rate of wages. It arose from the attempt on the part of these villeins—copyholders as they were called (because their names were on the roll of the manor), but who were legally slaves—to establish their right to a pecuniary commutation of the lord's claim to their labor against a threatened invasion of that custom, or, in other words, from a fear lest an effort should be made to revive the arbitrary control of the lord over the laborer and his work, which had prevailed before this customary method of commutation had been adopted.

The peasant's house was built of the coarsest material, most frequently of wattles daubed with mud or clay. Bricks appear never to have been used. The manor-house was generally built of stone, but the outbuildings were of the meanest description. We who are provided with the modern conveniences of living can hardly understand the privations of a mediæval winter, the joy of a mediæval spring, and the glad thankfulness of an

abundant harvest. Cheap artificial light is familiar to us, but in the mediæval era a pound of candles would have cost as much as the day's wages of the ordinary workman: so that we can understand how the offering of a candle at the shrine of a saint may have been the sacrifice of a coveted personal enjoyment.

The population of England in the fourteenth century is estimated to have been from one and a half to two millions. It is supposed that almost the same area of arable land was then cultivated as at present; but the rate of production was of course much less,—not more than one-fourth of what it now is. The condition of things in England as affecting the rate of wages was much changed in the fourteenth century by the diminution of the population caused by the Black Death. This plague destroyed so many people during the last half of that period that we may trace to its effect the birth of a new social and industrial England. The ordinary operation of the feudal system seems out of place in the presence of this terrible and unforeseen calamity. We enter in this strange way upon the struggle of economic natural forces against the arbitrary rule of the aristocratic element. But this is a subject large enough for future separate consideration.

The general obligations of a feudal vassal in England were service in council, in the court of law, and in the field. He was not bound by the conditions of his tenure to serve his lord out of the kingdom, and the period of his service was usually settled at forty days in each



year. The usual feudal incidents, the obligation to redeem his lord from captivity, to contribute to the dowry of his daughter, and to pay him a certain sum when his son became a knight,—reliefs, as these payments were called,—were commuted by Magna Charta for a sum of money, about five pounds for each knight's fee. Generally, the vassal forfeited his fief if he did not perform the obligations annexed to it, or if he made any attempt on the person or honor of his lord or of the members of his family. But these obligations were reciprocal. The lord was not allowed even to raise a stick against his vassal. Insult, outrage, or the denial of aid or justice entitled the vassal to withdraw his fief, that is, to refuse service, and even to declare war upon his lord. It may be that in the practical administration of such a system injustice was often done. But then, as now, the reason was not that such acts were not prohibited. The great curse of the time was its over-legality, and the belief that abuses could be rooted out by multiplying statutes and rules. Every relation in life in those days was looked at in a feudal aspect. The knight not only received and held his fief according to the well-settled feudal law, but a woman was bound to her husband by a promise resembling an oath of homage. In religion, men debated whether the Pope and the Emperor were each supreme in his own domain, each owing the other service for some fief held of him, or whether both held only of Christ as their *suzerain*. In law, the theory that the monarchy was a fief and the administration of justice one of

its necessary appurtenances has stamped itself on all English legislation. Even the towns as soon as they became corporations were regarded as persons, with the rights and obligations of feudal barons, and treated as such.

The changes in the English Constitution which had the most permanent influence in the subsequent history of the country are those which gave increasing power to Parliament at the expense of the king's prerogative, or rather the claims asserted by virtue of this prerogative by the Norman and Plantagenet kings, and the gradual extinction of villenage. These great changes, which have so completely moulded modern England, took place during and after the reign of Edward III., 1328, and during that hundred-years' quarrel among his descendants of the houses of York and Lancaster, called the War of the Roses. I can only give here a summary of the great work done in that period.

During this era, especially in the reign of Richard II. and Henry IV., Parliament succeeded: 1. In establishing its exclusive right of taxation. This, as need not be said, was a fundamental question, not much raised in the earlier reigns of the Norman kings, as the public expenditure was met by the incidents of knight's service, and by money raised by the scutage tax in commutation thereof, and by the private estates of the king himself. It is to be observed that this exclusive right of taxation, as well as nearly all the other guarantees of personal liberty and the security of property obtained in this era, were not purchased, as is usually said, by the

blood of Englishmen too proud to be slaves. It is nearer the truth to say that most of the great measures for securing the freedom of the subject were literally bought with money from the kings, and that their concessions of this kind, even Magna Charta itself, were grants made by these kings in the nature of a bargain, which those who suffered duly paid for. So much redress for so much money was the principle upon which the business was conducted. 2. Parliament gained not merely the power of taxation, but also the power to direct for what object the money raised by taxation should be expended. 3. It insisted, as I have already intimated, that its willingness to raise money for the king's service must depend upon the redress by the king of the grievances (which were always numerous) of which it complained.

The power of *dispensing* with the execution of statutes was a device of the king to free himself from the control of his Parliament, the exercise of which in the days of James II. produced a revolution, and it seems to have been confined in the reigns of the Plantagenets rather to exempting individuals from penalties imposed by certain statutes, than to a practical disregard of the law itself. The last claim made good during these reigns in some respects was the most important of all, for it was no other than the right of the House of Commons to impeach the ministers of the king for bad conduct. When we remember the theory of the English monarchy that the king can do no wrong, and that the ministers alone

are responsible for what is done, we shall see the necessity not merely of the existence of some such power as this, but of its exercise on proper occasions by a body representing the public, as the House of Commons does. I have dwelt on these claims made by the House of Commons, not merely because on this foundation rest the great principles of constitutional liberty in England, but also because we in this country have always adopted these great maxims of public liberty as fundamental in our systems of government, and have embodied them in our national and in all our State constitutions. They are the principles which have been usually attacked in various forms by the arbitrary measures of tyrants in England, and it will be observed with what a true historical sense Englishmen protest against their invasion when they claim their observance, not as self-evident political truths, but as "the ancient and undoubted rights and privileges of the people of this realm."

I can say but a few words now on the gradual extinction of villenage in England. It will be remembered that the villeins were, in the beginning, simply slaves, forced to work on the estate of the lord at his arbitrary discretion. Their services, by mutual agreement with the lord, were commuted for money payments, and this arrangement became so established a custom that the villeins became, as I have said, copyholders, holding their little parcels of land by a secure tenure as long as they kept their part of the bargain. In this way many villeins or serfs rose from the condition of slaves to that

of free laborers or even freeholders. Gradually, the increase of the population, and the frequent escape of the villeins from the manors to which they were bound to some town in which residence for a year made them free of their lords, converted many of them into free laborers. Their number was further increased by the necessity in which Edward III. during his long reign found himself, of selling to these villeins their freedom for money to enable him to carry on his wars in France. With this new freedom came the desire for higher wages and a better social position. This naturally brought about a struggle between them and the employers of labor, for on abundance of labor everything depended. Gradually, by these and other means, the serf became detached from the land of the lord, and master of himself, and compulsory labor became less common.

The agricultural laboring class was fast growing, apparently by general tacit consent, into the condition of free laborers, when their situation became suddenly complicated by the unexpected event of which I have spoken, the vast diminution of the population caused by the plague, or the Black Death, as it was called, about the middle of the fourteenth century. Half the population are said to have fallen, in a few years, victims to this terrible disease, and one of the results, of course, would have been, had natural economic forces been permitted to have free play, to raise the price of labor by diminishing the number of laborers. The lords, however, found it impossible to pay the vastly

increased prices for labor demanded by those who, for the time, commanded the labor market; and the cultivation of the land seemed impossible. In order to cure the multitudinous evils which were caused by this state of affairs, Parliament passed the celebrated Statute of Laborers (1349), by which it was enacted that, notwithstanding the increased demand for labor, no higher or lower wages were to be paid for it than those customary before the Black Death; and, moreover, the laborer was forbidden to quit his parish to seek employment elsewhere. There seems to have been a belief, as I have said, among the laboring classes that the object of this statute was to restore them to the condition of mere villeins, as they had been before the system of payments in money had been adopted, placing, therefore, the price of their labor at the arbitrary caprice of the lord. However that may be, the social revolt known in history as the rebellion of Wat Tyler and his associates broke out. This was in the reign of Richard II.; and, as is well known, the revolt was quelled by measures of the utmost severity and cruelty. But, notwithstanding all the efforts made in the interests of the lords to enforce these statutes, and others of a later period founded on the same principle, the natural law of supply and demand was too strong to be permanently broken; labor, as soon as the crisis passed, received its market price and value; and the demand for it, silently and surely, completely extinguished that modified form of slavery known as villenage.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PAPACY TO THE REIGN OF CHARLEMAGNE.

IN studying the characteristic features of early mediæval history, we must be struck with the important place held in it by what we would now call "the religious element." The influence of this element was paramount in the development of civilization in Western Europe for at least seven centuries. The power of the Church directed the course of the stream of history during these ages; kings and nobles and people seem but instruments employed by Providence to establish a form of society of which the Church not only set forth the ideal conception, but of which it was to be the true ruler. In this process the Church assumed to be both the teacher and the guide. The struggle between it and the wild world it sought to subdue was a conflict of mind against matter, of trained intelligence against brute force, of Christian truth and Christian virtues, sometimes, it is true, sadly obscured by baser motives, against the ferocity and barbarism of the Teutonic tribes and their descendants,—an attempt, in short, to establish on earth the City of God.

If organized Christianity, which is only another name for the Church, was so powerful an influence in mediæval life and history, we must study its nature and pretensions during the earlier period which succeeded the destruction

of the Roman authority in Western Europe. We have caught glimpses of the extent of that influence in our previous studies. We have, indeed, encountered the Pope and the Church at every step of our progress. The authority of the Church is a subject of such vast importance in the history of the mediæval era, and an acquaintance with the theory on which it was based is so essential to any proper understanding of that history, that we must give a special consideration to its development. I shall treat now only of organized Christianity, or the Church, and not of those ideas and dogmas which made it a distinct religious creed or system. I do so for this simple reason, that whatever influence upon society of a general and permanent kind was exerted by Christianity as a system of doctrine was due, in great measure, to its having been brought to bear upon the minds of men through the organism of the Church. Society in its wild and chaotic condition during the decay of the Roman Empire was probably incapable of receiving moral impressions through the channels by which they are now conveyed, and it is the opinion of an historian as eminent as Guizot, and withal a Protestant, that it was the Church—that is, organized Christianity—which saved alike Christian dogma and Christian moral law from the ruin that fell on all else that was civilized after the irruption of the barbarians.

The first thing that was needed to secure the general adoption at that time of any system either in the State or the Church was the belief that it was proclaimed by



an authority strong enough to enforce obedience, in civil government physical force, in religious opinion appeals to that religious or superstitious element in man which in all ages, when wisely made, have proved not only the strongest curb to keep in check his unruly passions, but also the most potent factor in moulding his destiny. What we have to do with, therefore, here is not Christian doctrine, but the methods which were taken to enforce that doctrine, and particularly the agencies which were used for that purpose. I might even narrow the field we are to explore, and say that we are concerned more especially with one particular aspect or development of the Church, and that is the papacy.

Whatever may have been originally the ideal and theoretical conception of the power of the Church and the methods by which, in the beginning, it was organized for the government of the faithful, it is very clear that during the Middle Age, practically and as a matter of fact, all these powers were absorbed and exercised by the great institution called the papacy. During this period the Popes might have said of the Church, *L'église, c'est moi*, in the same sense that Louis XIV. said of the State, "*L'état, c'est moi.*" Our business then for the purposes of mediæval history is to study the nature, rise, and progress of the papal power. We must investigate this subject as a simple historical fact with which we meet, and not attempt to discuss any theories concerning it. We are not to enter on the question whether it was or was not a usurpation, whether it was or was not of

Divine authority, whether its institution and its claims are recognized by the Bible. These questions are, of course, in one aspect vital; but for our purpose we must consider the papacy simply as an institution of controlling influence upon the destiny of mankind through a long series of ages, and we must endeavor to account for its existence and for its power on historical grounds only. We must regard the papacy, as we would Christianity itself, as an historical force of the first magnitude, and avoid as far as possible the dogmatic or theological questions involved in its action. We meet it as we do any historical fact, and must try and explain its significance.

What, then, is the papacy, and who is the Pope? The theory of the Roman Catholic Church is this: the Pope is the bishop of the See of Rome; the bishopric of that city has a primacy above all the other bishoprics of Christendom, not merely because St. Peter was the first bishop of that city, but because he was divinely commissioned as the chief or prince of the Apostles, with powers for the government of the Church superior to all the others, and because, in the Divine order, all his rights and prerogatives, as Primate of the Church, are transferred to his successors,—bishops of Rome and Popes. The Pope, then, according to this theory, is the universal pastor, bishop, and ruler of the Catholic Church. By its members he is regarded as having exercised these functions from the beginning; and those who deny the claims of the papacy admit that the Pope

is shown by history to have governed at least the Western Church since the fifth century as chief bishop, claiming to be successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome.

A few words may be necessary here as to the history of primitive church organization. It is said that bishops appear in Church history as governing or superintending more than one congregation as early as the second century; that they are not the officers spoken of in the Epistles as *Presbuteroi* or *Episcopoi*, both terms denoting the same officer in a single congregation. At what era and by what process these *Episcopoi* became rulers of churches, after the manner of later bishops, is not very clear; and it does not concern us now. It is evident that they were supposed from early times to have possessed the apostolic authority and prerogative, and also the power of transmitting the same to their successors in office. Whatever may have been the origin of the system, there can be no doubt as an historical fact that the organization of the Church, with bishops as its chief officers possessed of large powers, gradually extended over the greater part if not the whole of Christendom. These bishops were originally elected by the clergy with the consent of the laity within a particular city or district, afterwards called a diocese. The legislation of the Church, at least before Constantine, was conducted by a body of presbyters, called a council, under the presidency and direction of the bishop of the town or district. Gradually, power in the Church became more concentrated in the hands of

the bishops, and general councils of the whole Church, composed wholly of bishops, were called to settle the rules of doctrine and the discipline of its members throughout Christendom.

After Christianity became the State religion of the Roman Empire, a number of dioceses, partly as a matter of convenience, and partly, no doubt, from the growth of an oligarchical spirit in the hierarchy, were grouped together in the more populous portions of the Empire; and they were then called a province, the presiding bishop of this province being known in the East as a metropolitan, and in the West as an archbishop. Later, a still further concentration of the power of the bishops was made. A number of provinces were united and formed a larger district, called a Patriarchate. There were originally four Patriarchates, each established in a capital city of a different portion of the Empire: Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, were the seats of Patriarchs, not merely because they were chief cities of the Empire, but because the Christian Church in each of them had been founded by an apostle. To Jerusalem, as the sacred city, an honorary Patriarchate was assigned, while the dignity and importance of Constantinople as the capital of the Empire and the residence of the Emperor were recognized (not without a protest on the part of the others) by making the archbishop of that city a Patriarch also. These Patriarchs were, of course, personages of great importance and dignity, governing very large districts, made up of many dioceses and

provinces. Each one was not only Patriarch, but metropolitan and bishop also. The question of the papacy, or the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, is involved in the relations of these Patriarchs to each other. The Roman bishop claimed that to his See and Patriarchate belonged the primacy over all the others,—a claim founded not only upon his successorship to St. Peter, which in the fifth century was a recognized tenet of Western Christendom, but upon the alleged allowance of his claims by the decrees of early general councils of the Church, by whose authority an appeal in cases of disputed questions of doctrine and discipline was directed to be made to the See of Rome. Vague and shadowy as the claim of supremacy on the part of the Pope was in the beginning, it gradually grew in strength until it seemed to be fully recognized in the person of Pope Innocent I., A.D. 421, to whom and to whose successors the Emperor Valentinian III. directed that an appeal might be taken in questions involving the doctrines of the Church. Thus the pretensions of the Pope to a supremacy which made him practically the head of the Church were sanctioned by Imperial as well as by ecclesiastical authority.

There were many reasons, however, independent of his claim to the primacy founded upon Divine right as the successor of St. Peter, or upon the Imperial edict, which naturally inclined men to regard the Bishop of Rome as the fittest person for supreme bishop. In those days a visible unity, not merely unity of belief, but the

recognition of an authority which could compel absolute orthodoxy and uniformity of creed, was considered essential to the life of the Church. To men educated by the Roman law, uniformity was the essential part of government. The doctrine of diversity in unity would have been inconceivable to the Churchmen as to the lawyers of the time; and as to the doctrine of toleration,—“the noblest innovation of modern times,” as we think it,—its advocacy then would have been considered rank blasphemy. This belief, of course, did not preclude disputes as to what true orthodoxy of belief consisted in. On the contrary, never have there been more violent controversies as to the fundamental doctrines of faith than during the first four centuries, while there were none in the East as to the form of Church government or the extent of Church authority.

These disputes rent the Eastern Church in twain, and all the wonderful acuteness and dialectics of the Greek mind were employed for centuries in incrusting the Christian faith with the subtile and curious conceits of the Oriental systems. The heresies of Arianism, Manicheism, Gnosticism, Pelagianism, and countless other forms of error, were the fruit of these speculations. In this confusion the Eastern Christians needed some arbiter whose authority to settle these questions should be generally recognized. To whom would they more naturally turn than to the Bishop of Rome? He had important qualifications as a judge. Not only was he one of the four Patriarchs, but the only one who

had always kept his jurisdiction free from that taint of heresy which had infected from time to time all the others and thus lessened their catholic authority. Besides, he was the bishop of that great Imperial city whose constant *prestige*, as I have so often said, is one of the most salient facts in mediæval history, and whose glory, in the minds of thoughtful men, had in no way been affected by the transfer of the capital of the Empire to Constantinople. They willingly recognized its bishop as the fittest judge. Indeed, to such men Rome was never as great as when it ceased to be the residence of the Emperor. As the Imperial authority declined, that of the Pope in Italy rose. To the mediæval mind Imperial Rome could never die. It was more Imperial when it became truly papal. Nothing is more striking than the contrast between the wretched Emperor Honorius hiding amidst the marshes of Ravenna from fear of the invading Goths, and the Pope, Innocent, who comes fearlessly forth, braving the anger of Alaric, in order to rescue from ruin the city which had been abandoned by its legal defenders.

Thus, everything seemed to tend to exalt the power of the Pope, as the time of the extinction of the Western Empire approached: the alleged Divine commission, the decrees of councils, the appeals to his decision of controverted questions, the general recognition of his authority by the Churches of the West, the decrepitude of the Imperial power, the removal of the capital to Constantinople, the *prestige* of Rome, and the position held by

its bishop as the head of the only organization then existing capable of alleviating the miseries of the Gothic invasion of Italy,—all these things combined to make the mediæval Pope. As the power of the Emperor in Italy and the West decayed, that of the Pope grew in vigor, in extent, and, naturally, in independence. A nominal recognition of the power of the Emperor at Constantinople and of that of his representative—the Exarch—in Italy in the general course of ecclesiastical legislation was for a time continued; but on the great question of the supremacy of their See, the bishops of Rome, the Popes, from Innocent I. (411) to Gregory I. (590), gave no uncertain sound. The circumstances were propitious. The East was rent by dogmatic controversies, the West was overwhelmed by the barbarian invasions, and the Imperial authority, amidst all the distress and confusion of the times, was absolutely powerless. The Pope was the only surviving representative of a general authority, either as the protector of those who suffered from the miseries of the time, or as the supreme judge of what constituted the orthodox creed. This condition of affairs, combined with the Roman Imperial methods of exercising its authority, made the growth and evolution of the papal power to the condition in which we find it in the beginning of the seventh century natural and inevitable.

The Pope's power as that of the supreme and universal bishop seems to have been universally recognized in the West in the time of Gregory the Great (590).



He himself, not doubting that he was the true head of Christendom, was not satisfied merely to decide disputes which had arisen in long-established churches concerning doctrine and discipline, and to administer the ordinary affairs of the Church. He determined to show his appreciation of the responsibilities of this headship in a way which will probably strike us as affording at least the best proof of the earnestness of his convictions. He determined to convert distant England to Christianity by a missionary system organized by him and responsible to him alone for its methods of work. I need not repeat the story here which I have told in another chapter of this mission. St. Augustine in England and St. Boniface in Germany were in those countries the apostles not only of Christianity, but of that form and organization of Christianity of which the Pope was the head.

In the highest sense these missions were Christian, but in a most important sense they were eminently papal and Roman. Their converts in the vast regions in which they worked were not merely believers in Christian doctrine, but they were the children of that form of doctrine established in Rome under its bishop, the Pope. Obedience to the Pope was the first lesson they were taught in their new vocation, and mediæval history is very much taken up, as has been said, in showing the influence of this one principle of belief upon their destiny. Certainly it is not necessary to go further in order to explain the historical fact of the general recognition during the Middle Age of the spiritual supremacy of

the Pope. We have seen the Churches established before these claims were generally acknowledged bow with deference to the decision of the Church of Rome as "*omnium orbis et urbis ecclesiarum mater et caput*," and now we see the people of England and Germany and the remotest North taught Christianity by Roman authority and as embodied in Roman doctrine. There is said to be no better title to a certain kind of property than that by prescription; and if such a title be held good to ecclesiastical claims, certainly those of the papacy would seem, so far as we have yet investigated them, well established in history.

The papal power was greatly consolidated by the condition of Italy during the decline of the Empire. The Pope here appears under a new aspect. He is no longer a mere arbiter of theological controversies, but a civil ruler. He is not in those early days an ambitious chief seeking every opportunity to extend his domain, but rather a promoter of civilization and order, a benefactor of the human race forced by necessity to exercise a certain sort of temporal power for the defence and protection of his countrymen. It has sometimes been said that the cry of satisfaction, almost of triumph, of the Christian writers of the day on the capture of Rome by Alaric in 411 was unseemly, and at any rate that the early Christians understood nothing of patriotism in the Roman sense. There is no doubt but that Rome rose from the ruins after the siege of Alaric, a Christian city. The pagan writers insisted that its capture was due to its

abandonment of its old gods ; but the Pope, while urging the faithful to pray for their deliverance to the God of the Christians, tried in vain to rouse the Emperor, Honorius, to employ the duly-appointed human means, his own military power, for its defence. It is not to be wondered at that the Christians should rejoice that such a phantom of the once invincible Imperial authority should at last disappear with the paganism which was regarded as the source of its feebleness, nor that the Pope, whose courage against the barbarian was as conspicuous as the orthodoxy of his belief, should become, practically, ruler of the people of Rome by the best of all titles, that founded in their gratitude for his devotion to their interests.

In the dreary days of violence which followed, the Popes became, naturally and necessarily from their position and from the utter feebleness of the Emperors and the Exarchs their representatives, the rulers of Rome temporal as well as spiritual. Those were days either of actual invasion or of the perpetual fear of invasion which threatened by its violence to uproot the very foundations of Roman society. During this reign of terror, which lasted nearly two hundred years, the Popes seem to have been the only officials who did not lose their courage and presence of mind. No matter how alarming the occasion for their services, they were always equal to the occasion. Alaric, who destroyed so rudely the charmed life which Rome had lived for more than a thousand years, was a Christian, or professed to be such, but he and his followers were really barbarians in their temper, and bent

on pillage, which spared the riches consecrated to religious uses only because of the intervention of Pope Innocent. Attila was a barbarian of the barbarians, a wild savage drunk with blood, and well named "the Scourge of God." Yet Pope Leo the Great hesitated not, with only two companions, to confront this man in his fury, and persuaded him (whether by exciting his superstitious terrors or not it is hard to say) to spare the city of St. Peter from pillage by his wild hordes. He was not as successful in inducing Genseric, the Vandal chieftain, to follow the example of Attila; but courage and a sense of duty inspired him to make the attempt.

So with Pope Gregory I. at the period of the invasion of Italy by the fierce Lombards. Here again, like his predecessors, the Pope was obliged to assume the virtual sovereignty of Rome or expose the people to ruin. He alone could protect Rome and what remained of its inhabitants from slavery. When he became Pope, the city was suffering from a famine which was only relieved by his giving up for its use the grain produced by the Church estates in Sicily. For seven-and-twenty years the people of Rome had lived in fear of the occupation of the city by the Lombards. These wild hordes swept through the peninsula, compelling the tillers of the soil to pay them a third part of their produce, plundering churches and monasteries, destroying the cities, and mowing down the people like corn. One of their armies attacked Rome, and was driven off by the defenders of the city, whose courage was animated by the intrepid

Pontiff. Meanwhile, he was seeking peace with the king of these fierce Lombard warriors, not merely by using earthly weapons, but also by efforts to convert them through their queen, Theodelinda, to the orthodox and Catholic faith, for they were Arians. The argument from the cross seems to have been more potent than that of the sword. It is not easy to understand, perhaps, all the reasons for their sudden conversion. The result was that their attitude was changed from one of armed hostility to that of professed friendship, that the blessings of peace were secured to Italy, and that the Lombards were made for the time obedient sons of the Church, when the Pope's nominal sovereign the Emperor was not only unable to aid him, but by his folly was prolonging a war which he was unable to bring to a successful issue.

"For a short time longer," says an eminent writer, "the wreck of the Imperial dominion in Italy was preserved by the sole influence, by the religious eloquence and authority, of the unarmed Bishop of Rome. Such was in those days the influence and power of the clergy, so completely were they recognized as the true saviors of society, that they were able not merely to dictate their policy to armed and powerful sovereigns, to arrest barbarian invasion, and to snatch, as it were, conquests already in their hands, but in every quarter of Western Europe kings were seen abdicating their thrones, placing themselves at the feet of the Popes as humble mendicants, and submitting to the provisions and discipline of monks. No less than eight Anglo-Saxon princes

became monks before the middle of the eighth century, and about the same period kings of France and of Lombardy descended from their thrones and laid their temporal government down before the head of Christendom." In this way, gradually, but surely and inevitably, grew into men's minds the conception of the Pope not merely as the great high-priest of the Church, but as a sovereign in Italy wielding a power which, indirectly it is true, but none the less certainly, affected the policy of all temporal rulers. Here we find the germs of that characteristic feature of the later Middle Age, the firm belief held not only by the Popes themselves, but by what may be called the Church opinion of Europe, that the temporal and the spiritual power were and ought to be inseparably united. Thus the power of the two swords, as they were called, in the hands of the successors of St. Peter, either of which might be rightfully wielded as the exigencies of his office required, grew gradually familiar to men's minds.

It must be remembered that all political ideas in the Middle Age were conceived under a theological aspect and were worked out under a feudal form. The world was regarded, as it had been represented by St. Augustine in his great work on "the City of God," as a grand stage, upon which the Divine drama of the redemption of man was being enacted. The creation of the world and the establishment of human society were designed chiefly that the city of man should become the city of God. The chief end of life was to accomplish that

object, and the Christian Church had been established as the Divine means by which that end was to be reached. Hence the Church, with the Pope at its head, was fully endowed by the Almighty, as His representative on earth, with what was called the power of the keys,—the power of opening and shutting the doors of the city of God, either in this world or in the next, to all who sought admission to it. Out of this theory, universally recognised in the Middle Age, grew a strong faith in the extraordinary sacerdotal power of the Church, and necessarily a profound conviction of the supremacy of its discipline in earthly affairs, including all man's relations to society, both civil and ecclesiastical. To the mass of Christians the Church and the State were one and indivisible; and if, for convenience' sake, governments were in some respects administered with special reference to the promotion of worldly interests, it was always understood that the exercise of such a power should be, if not subordinate, at least not in conflict with the policy and aims of the Church.

Thus, the Pope, shocked by the decree of the Emperor at Constantinople which forbade the use of images in the churches, and powerless to oppose its enforcement, placed as he was between the robber Lombard king and the heretic Emperor, did not hesitate to cast off his allegiance, and to call in the aid of the Frankish kings to support by the sword the opinions of the Western Church in regard to image-worship. At the same time, by an exercise of his ecclesiastical power proper,

he excommunicated the Emperor and those in the East who held with him the iconoclastic opinions. These transactions, as I have explained elsewhere, form a most momentous epoch in human history. They first made the Pope, in any direct and proper sense, a temporal ruler, for the zealous Franks bestowed upon him the conquered Exarchate, and the result was the final separation of the East from the West,—a separation far more important in its effect than the abdication, in 476, of the Emperor of the West. More than all, they led to the establishment, in the person of Charlemagne and his successors, of a new or revived Roman Empire, with such relations between the Emperor and the Pope as to make the events of subsequent mediæval history chiefly illustrations of the conflict between the lofty claims of sacerdotal authority as established by the Church and the inextinguishable passion of personal independence in the Teutonic race.

The Popes and the Emperors become from the beginning of the ninth century the great personages of mediæval history. In order to show how natural and easy seemed the path by which the Pope, in the year 800, reached the point where, as vicegerent of God on earth, he could bestow the Imperial diadem of the Cæsars on Charlemagne with the prerogatives of the world-monarch, it is only necessary to say here that no one at that time was any more inclined to doubt the power of the Pope to create a new Emperor, if the interests of the Church required it, than his right to



excommunicate the old one for heresy, or to renounce from the same motive his allegiance to that Emperor at Constantinople who was the true successor of Augustus and of Constantine.

There is one cause of the rapid and extraordinary development of the power of the papacy which we must not fail to observe; and that is the greatness of the men who filled St. Peter's chair at the important epochs of its earlier history. They were not merely ecclesiastics. Had they been such, the papacy, so far as we can see, would never have consolidated its power, nor have influenced human history as it has done. They were statesmen as well,—that is, the men of their age who had the justest conceptions of the needs of that age and adopted the wisest means to secure their ends.

In one aspect only was the end proposed to himself by each Pope the same. They all equally aimed to secure the supremacy of the See of St. Peter, doubtless because they all believed that such was the Divine order. Popes like Innocent and Leo and Gregory are called great by the Church historians, and, on the whole, the title seems to be well deserved. They were great, not merely because in a rude age they established the superiority of mind over force, but also because they confirmed the supremacy of the See of Rome in the face of the most formidable obstacles. Their greatness consisted, among other things, in their capacity to make all the circumstances by which they were surrounded at a particular time subserve their chief purpose. Whether

in the days of their weakness they thought it expedient to flatter the vanity of Constantine, or, as they grew stronger, to denounce the impiety of Theodosius, whether by means of their example and discipline they were striving to teach the lessons of Christian charity to the Roman population corrupted by cruelty and vice, or whether they were asserting their claims to be the arbiters of orthodoxy in the Church, whether they were deprecating the wrath of Alaric or Genseric or Attila, which threatened their destruction, or asserting a Divine right to excommunicate one Emperor of the world because he was a heretic and to substitute another for him who was orthodox,—no matter, I say, what happened, the Popes I have named seemed to know how to treat each event in such a way as to increase and consolidate the power of the Roman See. Their chief aim, undoubtedly, was to place their spiritual power upon a firm foundation; but, this once secured, the result was for centuries the practical subordination of the temporal power to the spiritual. And we are not to forget that the Pope's power, both in the Church and in the State, thus grew naturally and logically out of opportunities wisely used, as they occurred, to strengthen it.

It remains to consider what history teaches us concerning what was good and what was evil in this papal power so highly exalted, as well as the nature of its influence upon the progress and civilization of mankind. We can only consider this subject satisfactorily by observing the result at different periods of history. We

may find that what was good in itself and adapted to the needs of society at one time may have become at another, from a change of circumstances, a source of unmixed evil. Let us consider in this chapter some features of the papal policy as they are shown by the study we have made of its history to the year 800.

We must try, of course, in order to form a correct judgment, to place ourselves in the position of those who lived and were forced to act in those days when the power of the papacy was developing its pretensions to the government of the world, and we must not apply our modern standard to a condition of the world's history wholly different from our own. Adopting such a method, we can hardly doubt that the papacy, whatever we may think of it as a proper form of Church government and of its claims now, was, at least in the earlier portion of the Middle Age, like many other institutions which then grew up, but which survived their usefulness (the feudal system, for example), a necessity of the time. If we cannot regard it as an ideal system suited to all times, yet we may think it the best possible system under the circumstances in which it was placed by the ruin of the Empire. To reach this conclusion, we must carefully consider the anarchy and confusion in Western Europe in that era when the mission of the Church was naturally to make these barbarians orthodox Christians, and to assimilate, if possible, their peculiarities with whatever was good in the heritage of the Roman civilization. I have certainly said enough

heretofore of the habits and ideas of these heathen invaders to prove that if they were to be made Christians at all, or to become civilized in the Roman sense, there was but one way to accomplish these objects, and that was by the wise use of the force of a strong will, or even of a despotic government.

What would have become of Christianity in those days of invasion if a system of equality among the faithful in the administration of its government had prevailed such as existed in the apostolic times among populations accustomed for ages to unquestioning submission to the Roman law because it was the law? If such a system had been introduced as a means of governing Christian communities and of propagating Christianity among the barbarian converts, we can hardly doubt that it would have failed. We have only to recall the strange methods by which, in accordance with the manners of the time, these tribes became Christian, to answer such a question. Consider, for instance, the conversion of the Saxons on the banks of the Elbe by Charlemagne, when he gave his conquered enemies the alternative of being baptized or of being drowned; or that of the followers of Clovis, who became Christians at the bidding and following the example of their chief. All the tribes of the invasion, we must remember, were made up of those in whom the instinct of savagery could only be rooted out by persistent and irresistible force, and, as far as Christianity and its special doctrines were concerned, these barbarians were

mere children, and needed a long education. The great evangelic truths, charity, justice, chastity, meekness, gentleness, were precisely the qualities, of all others, which these rude children of the North most thoroughly despised, and the only way to give them control over their lives was to teach them by an authority they were bound to respect, for in such a way only had they always been taught. To suppose that a system based upon such doctrines could by the force of mere moral suasion, as it is called, maintain any practical control over the lives of these barbarians, or that Christianity could have survived or been propagated among these tribes under any conceivable form of self-government, seems to me the greatest of delusions.

We must not neglect two peculiarities of this organization, which I have heretofore insisted upon, as most important in the position of the Church in those days, its visibility and its unity. The Church and the Pope at its head formed a visible power; and to the mind of the Middle Age, which viewed every principle in its concrete and not in its abstract form, it assimilated the ecclesiastical to the civil power, where it did not confound the two, always present, always ready to act, and always real. In the same way the unity of the power of the Church had immense influence upon the imagination of the barbarians. The power of the Church became as much a part of the life of every one as the power of the chief or king, and thus gradually and imperceptibly, but surely, the foundations of the new society

were laid. The barbarians respected the Church just as they respected any other power, simply because it presented itself as an official form of authority and could make itself felt. When the Church had reached this point in the control of its converts, it was able to enforce a practical obedience to the evangelic duties by means which they could appreciate.

In the earlier ages this work was done through the agency of the bishops, who were not merely the strenuous asserters of the doctrine and discipline of the Church within their jurisdiction, but also, as I have said, the strongest defenders of their people against the misery and tyranny of the time. In the early days of the invasions they were the champions and representatives of the conquered, and they sought to protect the lives and save from pillage and ruin the property of those whom they governed. For a long time they seem to have been the only recognized and official representatives of those who suffered from this rule of force. But the feudal system, which altered so profoundly the organization of civil society in an unexpected way, took away from the bishops the desire, perhaps the capacity, to exercise any longer this holy mission. The episcopate became an aristocracy, and was practically, for a time, absorbed by the State. The bishops appointed by the king formed a part of the aristocracy of the country. They became feudal barons, with rights of sovereignty and other feudal powers, such as were conferred upon the dukes and counts under that system. The wealth of many of their

sees was enormous, and they soon exhibited the same tastes and the same passions as the aristocracy of which they formed part. They neglected the cure of souls; they became too feeble or too indolent to defend the rights of the Church against the encroachments of the warrior chiefs; and very often they forgot their duty and gave themselves up to the pleasures and occupations of the world around them.

In this condition they ceased to be, as was proper and natural, any longer the guides of the Christian people. Under these circumstances the power of the Church was practically, for the time, taken out of their hands by the Pope. Certainly nothing is more remarkable in the writings of those Popes whom history calls great, before the year 800, than the manner in which they denounce the faithlessness of the bishops, and the earnestness with which they protest against that fatal vice of the feudal system which permitted these prelates to purchase their sees of the king, thus committing that most grievous of ecclesiastical sins, *simony*, or the purchase of Church dignities for money, to the disgrace of their order, in violation of the canons of the Church, and to the ruin of the people committed to their charge. Organized Christianity seemed to be in danger of becoming a Caliphate, where the head of the State would be practically also the head of the Church. The Popes, with a fine instinct of the duties of their position, began a conflict to assert their jurisdiction in the appointment of bishops,—a dispute which, under the name of

the War of the Investitures, was waged for centuries, and of which we shall speak in its proper place.

One of the peculiarities of the papacy in these times, when all else was local, narrow, and separatist, was its thoroughly cosmopolitan spirit. Deeply impressed with the belief that the Christian religion was a world-religion, Catholic in its highest sense, all their measures were taken to make their ideal conception of it a reality. This is remarkably illustrated by their policy in regard to Christian missions. They began properly by the effort made by Gregory I. in 590 to convert the Anglo-Saxons in England, and were followed by the work of Boniface in Germany and Anskar in Denmark. The result was not merely to bring the population of these countries into the obedience of the Roman See, but also to aid greatly in bringing them within the pale of Roman civilization. Nothing tended more to maintain the condition of barbarism in Europe than the long-continued separation and isolation in which the people lived. Gradually they were brought into relations with each other which had a common basis; and the two agencies which had most to do with fusing them together were a common Christianity organized under a supreme head, and the Roman law and system of administration.

Modern civilization is much indebted to the work of the early Popes acting in opposition to the authority of the kings, and very often to that of the bishops, many of whom had become under the feudal system thoroughly secularized. As I have said before, I am not



concerned here with the question how far under the Popes was established a system of government unlike that of the apostles or that of the early Christians, but with their efforts to civilize and humanize the savages by making them Christians, and to prevent the Church, and the riches with which it had been endowed, from becoming the prey of the spoiler. While there were many very bad Popes in this era, the greatest and best also then ruled the Church. To the exercise of their power it is due, among other things, that the sanctity of married and domestic life has been surrounded by so many safeguards in the habits and opinions of modern Europe; that Christian charity is coextensive with Christian belief; that the evils of slavery and cruelty, deep-rooted in Roman as in barbarian society, were mitigated; that, by means of the discipline which they enforced, the ideal at least of justice and right was maintained; and that the practical equality of all men as Christians was insisted upon.

These early Popes did, no doubt, a noble and fruitful work, but it was done on a principle and assumption which modern society has refused to recognize as a true guide; but we must not misjudge them on that account. That principle was the supremacy of their own authority in the last resort in all cases. To it all power on earth, civil and ecclesiastical, must bow. For a time that principle was, as we have seen, universally recognized and assented to; but shortly after the epoch of the coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire,

that great act which was designed to perfect and consolidate the papal power, a conflict between its claims and those of the opposite principle, that of individualism, arose, and has continued in one form or another to this day. This conflict forms an era in the history of the papacy; and I propose in the next chapter to consider its earlier stages.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PAPACY AND THE EMPIRE.

THE mediæval theory of the relations between Church and State was supposed to have found a practical solution in the revival of the Western Empire, and the coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor of what is called the Holy Roman Empire, by the Pope or Bishop of Rome, in the year 800. That theory, in its fullest development, is thus set forth by Mr. Bryce: "The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire are one and the same thing in two aspects. Catholicism, the principle of the universal Christian society, is also Romanism; that is to say, it rests upon Rome as the origin and type of its universality, manifesting itself in a mystic dualism which corresponds to the two natures of its Founder. Opposition between two servants of the same king is inconceivable, each being bound to aid and succor the other, the co-operation of both being needed in all that concerns the welfare of Christendom at large." In this way the Pope and the Emperor divide the government of the whole world, and by it the only self-consistent union of Church and State is reached. The rightful Pope was he who had been canonically elected and was approved by the Emperor; the rightful Emperor was that King of the Franks who

had been crowned by the Pope in Rome. The change from the old Roman system to that of the mediæval age was supposed to be this, that while under the former the two offices of Imperator and Pontifex Maximus were held by the same person, in the latter their duties were performed by two, each supposed to be governed by the same impulse. In a previous chapter we have endeavored to explain the motives and objects of the original parties to this agreement,—Charlemagne and the Pope; and we have now to consider the practical working of the system in the hands of their successors.

We must not judge of the wisdom or political sagacity of those who maintained this theory of the dualism of the world-monarchy and the world-religion by what we know, from subsequent history, of its lamentable failure. We should rather remember that at the time it was adopted, or rather during many ages before and subsequent to its formal establishment in the reign of Charlemagne, this theory was perfectly in accordance with the intellectual wants of Europe. Catholicism was not then a tyranny, for the speculations it permitted were fully commensurate with the wants of the best thinkers of the age. It was not a sect or an isolated influence acting in the midst of Europe and forming a weight in the balance of power, but rather an all-pervading energy, animating and vivifying the whole social system. During the period when the papacy asserted its loftiest claims to the government, ecclesiastical and civil, of the world, there was a certain unity of type of thought and

belief as to the nature and lawfulness of this form of government. The feudal system, the monarchy, the laws, the studies, even the amusements of the people, all grew out of ecclesiastical teaching and embodied ecclesiastical modes of thought. The Church, with the Pope at its head, was the very heart of Christendom, and the spirit that radiated from it penetrated into all the relations of life, and colored the institutions it did not create.

Notwithstanding, however, the universal faith of Christendom in this magnificent scheme of the proper relations between the Church and the State, as represented by the Pope and by the Emperor, history shows us that for the special purpose it had in view it was a stupendous mistake. Obstacles to its full development, which no one at the time it was adopted could have anticipated, soon made its success hopeless. It is with the nature and force of these obstacles that we are concerned here. In one sense their history illustrates an important phase of the strife out of which modern life and modern ideas were evolved, for it exhibits not merely a struggle for power between the Church and the State, but also a conflict between the principle of authority and that of individualism, a conflict perpetually going on in European life and inseparable from its constitution.

What, then, does history tell us of the manner in which the alliance between the Pope and the Emperor, as settled at the coronation of Charlemagne, was carried out? The great Emperor, as I need not repeat, was in

one sense the most powerful champion and advocate of the Church in all history. Practically, he fulfilled the functions of defender of the universal or catholic faith as a duty which he had solemnly assumed at his coronation. He was in this sense the most active and efficient of missionaries. But in so doing Charlemagne was in this sense only under the orders of the Pope, that he considered it his duty as Roman or Christian Emperor to enlarge the boundaries and enforce the discipline of the Church. With the title he had assumed also the Imperial power of a Theodosius or a Justinian, both of whom claimed to rule the Church and the Empire as sovereign. His laws or decrees which fix the obligations, the revenues, and even the duties of the clergy are issued in the name of the Emperor. They are monarchical and Imperial, and not papal or even synodical.

The claim that the Imperial crown was the gift of the Pope was not set forth by the Church authorities during the reign of the Emperor. It would have been, indeed, singularly out of place to have done so when Charlemagne was recognized not only as Emperor and world-monarch, but as King of the Franks, with absolute power over the estates both of the Church and of the laity. The Emperor was a faithful son of the Church, but he took his own way of showing his fidelity. He founded many bishoprics, endowed many monasteries, and gave to the claim to tithes the sanction of Imperial law; but all these steps to aggrandize the Church were taken without consulting the Pope, and

simply from his sense of what was fitting in him to do as the ruler of Christendom. The Church influence, then, in his day and in that of his successor was not such as to make him that obedient son of the Pope which perhaps the theory of his relations to the head of the Church implied that he should become, and which in the later days, when Popes were stronger and Emperors weaker than they were in those of Charlemagne, formed the basis of their relations to each other.

The Popes in the time of Charlemagne and that of his son, Louis the Pious, were in no condition to dictate to the Emperors their policy, even if they could not wholly approve it. It is worthy of remark that during a large portion of the Middle Age an order of the Pope might strike terror into the hearts of the rulers of the most distant countries and of the Emperor himself, and yet the Pope in Rome itself was often at the mercy of a mere mob. Such was not the case in the day of Charlemagne. His thoroughly Imperial attitude (in the Roman sense) towards the Church was fully recognized, and even the irregularities of his own private life, especially in his marriage relations, were regarded at Rome at least with tenderness. In the ninth and tenth centuries the Popes were forced to lean for support more and more on the strong arm of the Emperors. With their local authority set at defiance, and their lives even threatened by the Roman populace or by the fierce barons of the Campagna, they were only too glad to seek aid from the Emperors, successors of Charlemagne, who alone could

restore them to the exercise of their lawful spiritual power.

The theory of Charlemagne's time of the mutual interdependence of the Empire and the papacy had but a one-sided application for many years after the death of the great Emperor and of his descendants, and during the fierce struggle which ensued upon the extinction of his posterity among the princes of Italy for the supreme rule of that country. The Popes were often the nominees of the Emperor, always more or less dependent upon his authority for the maintenance of their position, and any attempt, under such circumstances, to assume that haughty attitude towards the Empire which became in later days habitual, on the ground of their spiritual supremacy, would have been as futile as it would have been ill-timed. The weapons in the spiritual armory were carefully preserved, but they were not used until the times grew more propitious and men occupied the chair of St. Peter who knew how to wield them.

The papacy itself, from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the tenth century, was in a state of absolute degradation and abasement. It was the prize sought for by violent, ambitious, and dissolute men, and, when gained, its holy office was defiled by the crimes of those who held it. Its moral power, in Italy at least, seemed for the time lost. In these dark days, so far from the Empire being controlled by the Pope, it was the Pope himself and the most sincere and religious



Churchmen of the time who constantly appealed to the Emperor to save the papacy from absolute ruin.

About the middle of the eleventh century a change or revival takes place, and the great figure of Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII., comes into view. He presents himself not only as a reformer of the discipline of the clergy, but as having established practically upon a new basis the relations of the spiritual with the civil power. Gregory VII. belonged to that strong race of monks who were the bravest and most earnest reformers of society in Western Europe in the darkest days of the Middle Age. Surely, if there ever was a time when reform of the most sweeping kind was needed, both in Church and in State, to save society from relapsing into barbarism, it was in the middle of the eleventh century, when the influence of Hildebrand became conspicuous. The Church had become completely secularized, by which comprehensive word I mean that its humanizing and civilizing character, the life-giving influence of the spirit of Christianity, of which it was the representative, had been almost destroyed. The power of its discipline was made subordinate to the rule of force, which then governed the world under the name of the feudal system, of which the bishops were often among the richest and most powerful members. The distinguishing features of all true civilization, reason, right, and justice, which it was the great office of the Church to embody and to maintain, had almost disappeared from the control of affairs. Pope after Pope was elected by men moved only by

the furious passions of the Roman mob or by the plundering spirit of the barons of the Roman Campagna; the riches of the Church, which had so largely increased as to give to its higher officials the control of nearly half of the cultivated land of Europe, were so diverted from their original use and intention as to convert the bishops into mere feudal barons, to the great loss and suffering of God's poor. The grand dream of Charlemagne, which sought, in the establishment of a universal monarchy, perpetually informed, penetrated, and guided by a universal religion, to establish on earth a society in which peace, based on the rule of law and order, was to reign,—all this fair dream was dispelled by the rude shock which the infant European civilization received from the disintegration of his universal monarchy and the consequent return of that barbarism out of which his strong arm had lifted it.

In the confusion and anarchy which grew out of this condition, the relations between the Pope and the Emperor, which had been established by Charlemagne and reaffirmed by Otho the Great for the government of the world, remained nominally the same; but for nearly two centuries it had become practically impossible for either to exercise his respective functions as had been originally designed. To this severance of these relations Hildebrand ascribed all the evils of the time,—the worst of all being, in his opinion, that practical dependence of the Popes on the secular power which had been substituted for the harmonious co-operation of each left

free to act in his own sphere. The venality, corruption, and neglect of duty on the part of the bishops, the consequent contempt of the discipline of the Church, the suffering, the oppression, and the degradation of the population, were in his opinion more or less due to this change. To Gregory VII. the reform needed was the revival of the theocratic spirit in European society and the control of its development by the power and discipline of the Church. The Imperial power, having, in his opinion, failed to do the duty assigned to it, must therefore be disowned.

We must remember, in considering his plan, not only that Hildebrand was a monk with the most ascetic spirit and naturally imbued with the ideas of the cloister, but also that he was only carrying out the theory embodied in the great text-book on the relations between ecclesiastical and civil power during the Middle Age, St. Augustine's famous treatise *De Civitate Dei*, which had been the real basis of the arrangement with Charlemagne. To our modern notions Gregory's system appears very narrow, and insufficient, and wholly despotic; but we need not for that reason doubt his earnestness and sincerity. And, further, we may believe that in what he did, lofty as were his claims, he was not moved by mere worldly ambition, a desire to advance himself or to aggrandize his family, as were so many of his successors, but that according to his lights he was a true reformer, striving to exalt the papacy as the best means, at least in that day, of ruling Christian society and realizing the true ideal

conception of human life. Let us see, then, how he went about his work, and what that work was.

Gregory's first object was to free the papacy from the control of the Emperor, who had ceased, in his opinion, to be to the Church at least what he was designed to be. This was attempted by a decree of the Council held at Rome in 1059, under Nicholas II., before Gregory VII. became Pope, but manifestly prompted by him. This decree provided that hereafter the Pope should be elected by the Cardinals, and that neither the Roman populace nor the Emperor should interfere with the choice of the Church so expressed. This was a most important step in the theocratic programme. His second object when he became Pope (1073) was to reform the condition of the Church itself, especially as affected by two evils which he regarded as the crying evils of the time,—viz., simony, and the marriage of the clergy. In regard to simony, which is the purchase of an ecclesiastical preferment or office for money, it had always been considered, as already stated, one of the grossest ecclesiastical sins. Owing to the vast wealth of the Church, the chief offices in it, and especially the bishoprics and the great abbacies, had become positions of great worldly power and dignity, their occupants being regarded throughout Europe as on the same social level as the chief feudal nobles. These places therefore, as was natural, were sought after with the greatest eagerness by the ambitious and aspiring, and were openly, in violation of the canons of the Church, bought and sold as if

they had been lay fiefs. They became simply feudal estates under another name. They were often occupied by persons wholly unfitted for the performance of episcopal functions. Their wealth, and the peculiar tenure by which they held their estates, made the bishops throughout Western Europe almost as independent of the Popes as the great feudal lords were of the king or the Emperor. The faithful suffered instead of deriving aid and comfort from such bishops, for they were too often called upon to make up by severe exactions the sums paid by the incumbents for these places.

In regard to the marriage of the clergy, although it would appear that the practice had been discouraged in the earlier ages of the Church, and even possibly forbidden by the canons, yet in the days of Gregory VII. it was connived at, or at least not made an offence against Church discipline, and a very large portion of the clergy, particularly in Germany and Southern Italy, were married men. On this subject there had long been a controversy between the monks and the secular clergy; but it was not until the time of Gregory VII. that the monks were strong enough to carry out their long-cherished scheme of the enforced celibacy of the clergy by a decree of the Church. There are many obvious reasons why the celibacy of the priesthood at that time was the true policy of the Church, of which we need mention here only one, and that is, that in the feudal age, with the constant tendency then existing to make everything hereditary, the ministry of the Church,

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instead of being an office open to any one, no matter what his origin, who had a true vocation, would have become gradually the heritage of certain great families, and thus would have been established an aristocratic caste, a system in every way foreign to any proper conception of Christianity.

These two evils, simony and a married clergy, were regarded by Gregory, doubtless, not only as crushing all true life out of the Church, but also as removing the priesthood from that ever-present law of discipline which he deemed essential for the proper performance of its work. The first act of his pontificate (1073) was to obtain from a Council at Rome a decree not merely prohibiting simony and marriage as ecclesiastical crimes, but absolutely invalidating all the sacraments performed by simoniacal or married priests, thus by one blow removing from the priestly office thousands of those who had up to that time peaceably, if not legally, exercised its functions. It is not easy to exaggerate the effect of such a shock as this anathema on the existing practice throughout Europe. But Gregory was a bold man, and, whether he was fighting with his own order who legally owed him obedience, or with the Emperor to whom legally he owed obedience, his courage in maintaining his theories never wavered.

The quarrel which arose from the attempts of Gregory to accomplish his object by which he is best known in history is that with the Emperor Henry IV., generally known as "the War of the Investitures." The scheme

conceived by the Pope of ruling Europe by a theocracy was begun by these measures. We have seen how the clergy were brought under his obedience and discipline by the removal of the two great evils which he regarded as the principal obstacles to that design. The dispute about the new discipline, however, soon involved other questions of a more general kind, especially that of the Investitures, properly so called, in which it was to be settled whether the bishops and other high Church dignitaries should be appointed or invested with their office by the Emperor or the Pope.

The decision of this question was complicated by the twofold position held by the bishops in the feudal system, which was then the universal system of government throughout Europe. They were not merely spiritual pastors or overseers as they are now, fulfilling only the spiritual functions of their office, and hence owing obedience to the Pope as the head of the Church. They were, besides, usually great feudal lords, holding in right of their sees large landed estates under the same conditions as other feudal barons held theirs. Because these estates were inseparably annexed to their sees, it was necessary, according to the feudal theory, that they should be invested with them in the feudal form by the overlord or sovereign. Practically, the result was that the bishops became the nominees of the king or the Emperor. This practice was regarded by Gregory and his successors as encroaching upon the rights of the Church, with whom, it was claimed, ought

to rest the exclusive power of appointing bishops. Much has been and may be said on both sides of this question. If it be clear that the bishop, as responsible to the Pope for the performance of the purely spiritual or ecclesiastical functions of his office, should be appointed by him, it was also natural that the kings and the Emperor should insist that those who had the use and revenue of one-half of the lands within their territories should not be any more independent of the jurisdiction of the lord paramount than those who held the other half of those lands.

It was impossible, according to the mediæval conception, to separate the office of bishop from the possession of the lands by which his see was endowed. Hence the quarrel of the Investitures,—the Popes claiming the power of the appointment of the bishops and the practical control of the lands attached to the sees, and the Emperor and kings being unwilling to give up the patronage of the Church, or to abandon so potent a means of keeping the clergy serving in their territories within their control, as the feudal subjection of their lands. The investiture was so called from the feudal symbolical form of conferring an office. This form in the case of a bishop consisted of a gift to him, at the time he took possession of his see and swore allegiance to the civil authority, of a ring, which symbolized his marriage to the Church, of a staff or crosier, which denoted his pastoral authority, and a touch of the sceptre, by which the territorial possessions of the see were supposed to be conferred on him.



Henry IV. was Emperor of Germany at the time when this question assumed great practical importance owing to the efforts of Gregory to suppress simony and to enforce the celibacy of the clergy. These reforms which he had so much at heart could not, of course, be carried out as long as the power of the investiture of the bishops was in the hands of lay sovereigns. Henry, of the Franconian line, was a mere boy when he became Emperor. His early life was somewhat dissolute, and he had more than the common measure of trouble with his subjects, especially the turbulent nobles of Saxony. His power as Emperor in Germany for a long time was merely nominal, and doubtless during his reign the Pope took advantage of his weakness to assert boldly the pretensions of the Church within his German dominions. At first Gregory (who from the beginning seems to have assumed the position of arbiter and dictator of the Imperial policy towards his subjects both in Church and in State) scolded the Emperor for the irregularities of his life very much as if he had been a naughty child. He next tried to induce him to give up simoniacal practices in the appointment of bishops, and to degrade those who had obtained preferments in that way. Because the Emperor and the German prelates hesitated to act in this important matter rapidly enough to suit the impatient zeal of Gregory, he convoked a Council at Rome in the year 1075, in which he abrogated by a decree the claim and practice of the investiture of the clergy of the endowments of their offices by

the sovereign whose subjects they were. By this decree those who gave and those who received such investiture, both the layman and the ecclesiastic, were equally deposed from any authority hitherto attached to the offices they held.

This decree made a revolution in the whole feudal system throughout Europe, as far as it affected the relations of the possessors of Church lands to the State control. In the Empire it annulled the power of the Emperor over half his subjects who were landholders; and, indeed, if the theory had been fully carried out, the Pope must have become the temporal liege lord of half the world, as he was already the spiritual father of the whole of it. This decree was met by Henry by the act of a synod composed of German prelates deposing the Pope. Whereupon the Pope, of course, retaliated by deposing and excommunicating Henry. Such a sentence in those days had a terrible import. Henry, deserted by his followers as an excommunicate person, submitted, or feigned submission. He sought the Pope at the castle of Canossa, among the Apennines, and there, as I have related, in the garb of a penitent, abjuring the errors which the Pope had condemned, and promising amendment, he was admitted by the haughty Pontiff, after the most painful and degrading scene of humiliation, to his presence, and received absolution for his crime. But he soon afterwards found himself strong enough to scorn the Pope's mercy, and again set him at defiance, chased him from Rome and forced him to take refuge with

the Normans, and was again excommunicated. The Pope in his extremity never yielded in the slightest degree his lofty pretensions. "No," said the brave old man, as he breathed his last at Salerno: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity, and *therefore* I die in exile."

But the quarrel did not die with him. It continued under successive Popes and successive Emperors with increasing bitterness, involving all the horror and confusion of civil war in Germany, a conflict in which the whole machinery of the higher Church discipline—deposition, excommunication, and interdict—was freely used for nearly fifty years. At last, in 1122, by the Concordat of Worms, as it was called, it was agreed between the Pope and the Emperor of that time that the clergy should be free to elect their bishop, but that the representative of the Emperor should be present at the election; that the Pope might invest with the spiritual office under the symbol of the ring and the crosier, and that the Emperor should only invest the bishop elect with the possession of the estates attached to the see by a touch of the sceptre. This has the appearance of an indecisive battle; but practically, as subsequent history shows, the Pope was the victor.

The pretensions of the Popes to authority over the sovereigns of Europe increased in extravagance until the close of the thirteenth century. They not only considered it their duty to defend the rights of the Church, according to their theory of those rights, from encroachments by the civil power, but they claimed to be universal

*censores morum* throughout Europe, using the discipline of the Church unsparingly to punish the greatest sovereigns whom they judged guilty of offences against the Church. Nor did they claim jurisdiction only over offences such as these, but a new crime was discovered in the acts of the temporal sovereigns which was often regarded as the most flagitious of all and one to be visited by the severest and swiftest punishment,—that of calling into question the papal jurisdiction over kings.

For a long period, whenever the Pope or the sovereign happened to be a man of strong will, this conflict between the papal authority and that of the lay rulers throughout Europe broke out afresh. Thus, we have the quarrels between Hadrian IV. and Frederick Barbarossa about the Lombard cities and their respective claims to the kingdom of Naples; the controversy between Henry II. of England and Thomas Becket concerning the exemption of the clergy in England from the jurisdiction of the civil courts; the long struggle between Gregory IX. and the Emperor Frederick II., between Innocent III. and Philip Augustus of France, where the Pope appears in the grand part of the champion of the sanctity of marriage; the excommunication and deposition of John of England; and, later, the ignoble strife between Boniface VIII. and Philip le Bel of France. Here is a strange jumble of subjects of quarrel arising between two persons because one claimed to exercise the spiritual and the other the civil authority. In many of these controversies the Popes were not only

judges but law-givers also, creating the offence (which was too often an alleged denial of their power) which they undertook to try. In both cases they claimed supreme and absolute power, the exercise of which they insisted was essential to the maintenance of truth and justice in that wild age. The medicine might sometimes be harsh and bitter, as Innocent III. once said, but the disease was deep-rooted.

All these acts of the Popes seem now to us the strangest usurpations; but it is very clear that such was not the verdict of the Christian conscience as to most of them at the time they were done. It is worth considering how the Pope enforced these extraordinary claims to authority which he made in an age when brute force alone compelled obedience to any other form of rule. He lacked not means which proved very effective. Prolonged disobedience to the Pope's decrees by the civil rulers, which extended to almost every conceivable case of public scandal or of violation of the law of the Church, was uniformly punished in the last resort by those most terrible weapons of the ecclesiastical armory, excommunication, interdict, and deposition. To a private person excommunication in those days was a fearful reality, for it made him literally an outcast, not merely depriving him of those sacraments of the Church which formed the life-blood of the man of the mediæval age, but cutting him off also from all those relations with his fellows which social life was instituted chiefly to promote. In the case of kings and sovereigns, not only did they

suffer the same privations as individuals, but their authority was taken away from them, their subjects were released from their obedience, and often some one, generally a rival, considered by the Church as more worthy, was placed in their stead. Not only were these unfortunate sovereigns made to suffer as individuals and as kings, but what is technically called an interdict was laid upon their dominions, by which the Church and all its sacraments and ministrations, which formed, as I have said, the breath of life in the Middle Age, were for the time withdrawn from the people who had the misfortune to be the subjects of one who had disobeyed the Church. This penalty, in days when to speak of politics as simply a matter of secular concern would have been regarded not merely as heresy but as an absurdity, seldom failed, when persistently applied, to tame the wildest and most lawless of those Teutonic warriors whose one weak point was the ease with which they were controlled by their superstitious terrors. We think of Henry IV. of Germany, of Henry II. of England, of Philip Augustus of France, of the Emperor Frederick II., and even of the English King John, as bold men; but they were no match for the crowned priest who sat in St. Peter's chair, and they one and all submitted to his orders, so that their kingdoms might be relieved from an interdict and themselves from excommunication.

We may, I think, search history in vain to find any moral power which has had in the affairs of mankind a force equal to that of excommunication as it was

employed against civil rulers during the Middle Age ; and, what seems very extraordinary, but what is perhaps the true explanation of the frequent use of this terrible punishment, its application seems to have been approved by the Christian opinion of the age. The authority of the Church was trusted both to define and to punish the offences of those who were supposed to be above the reach of the ordinary laws. While the validity of pretensions such as these was recognized, the claims of the Church to interference in the details of civil government were admitted on the same principle.

The Canon or Church law recognized in everything the superiority of the ecclesiastical to the temporal authority. It insisted upon the exemption of the clergy from the jurisdiction of the civil courts ; it permitted the Church authorities to dispense, for cause shown, with its own prohibitions in regard to marriages within certain degrees of affinity, and with the obligations of the most sacred oaths ; it permitted the Pope to give ecclesiastical preferments of value to non-residents, and to such an extent was this practice carried that in the time of Henry III. in England her Church estates seem to have been a free pasture for Italian priests ; moreover, it taxed the clergy, who were exempt from State taxation, for the benefit of the court of Rome. This last abuse seems to have done more to raise a spirit of resistance to the papal power than any of its acts during the Middle Age. The clergy, with here and there a notable exception, such as Stephen Langton and Robert Grossetête in

England, looked on with calmness, if not with approbation, when they saw the authority of their own sovereigns defied by the Pope, but when they themselves were pillaged under a claim of the same power they were disposed to regard their own spiritual sovereign as an arbitrary oppressor. The wealth of the clergy—that is, of the higher dignitaries of the Church—and the corruption of the court of Rome were universally regarded at the close of the thirteenth century as grave abuses, and the indignation they excited found utterance first among the priests themselves,—Wyclif, Huss, and Jerome of Prague,—and amidst sectaries such as the Albigenses and the Cathari; and from them, and from men like them, came the mutterings of that storm which was to burst in its full force on the papacy in the sixteenth century.

But for the present the power of the Popes was practically unchecked. The pretensions of Boniface VIII., who was the last but one of the Popes who used his prerogative for the deposition of kings in the genuine mediæval fashion, were more extravagant than those of any of his predecessors. He insisted not merely that he had a right to interfere with those acts of Philip le Bel which concerned the position of the clergy in France, but also that it was his business to compel Philip to reform the government of France in all respects; and for that purpose he actually summoned an assembly of the French bishops to meet at Rome to dictate to the king, under the inspiration of the Pope, the policy he should pursue in the government of his own kingdom. He



claimed that all persons, of whatever rank, should obey this summons, and for this reason : "Such is our pleasure, who, by Divine permission, govern the world." It is hard to find anything to admire in the character of Philip le Bel ; but submission of his authority to a foreign potentate was not one of his many weaknesses. This extraordinary act of Boniface was met by the king by a convocation of the first States-General which ever met in France (1304), a body which denounced the Pope's pretensions and insisted upon what afterwards became a fundamental axiom of the Gallican Church down to the Revolution,—the entire independence of the temporal power of the French kings of the spiritual power of the Pope.

Shortly after the power and with it the pretensions of the papacy to a supreme and universal jurisdiction in temporal affairs was completely broken by its transfer from Rome to Avignon (1305), where it was established for nearly seventy years, a period known in Church history as the Babylonian captivity. In that city it ceased, in the eyes of a very large part of Christendom, to possess that sacred cosmopolitan character which no doubt had had much to do with the veneration and respect with which its catholic authority had been regarded. At Avignon the Popes were always French, the majority of the Cardinals were French, and the whole policy of the papacy was manifestly under French influence, while the rapacity of the Popes was even greater than it had been at Rome. The *prestige* of

Rome once lost, the whole tone of the head of the Church changed. The abuses which had been complained of still remained ; but at least one great obstacle, a portentous one in the imagination of mankind, which had hitherto overshadowed all hope of reform,—the awful majesty of Rome, and what was due to it,—existed no longer.

Besides, the foundation on which the undisputed supremacy of the Pope rested, the visible organic catholic unity of the Church, was crumbling. That unity was threatened by what is known in ecclesiastical history as the great schism, which occurred in 1377, when one party of the Cardinals who had returned to Rome chose as Pope an Italian, who took the title of Urban VI., and another party, who were supposed to be in the French interest (on the plea that the election of Urban had been forced on the College of Cardinals by the Roman populace), chose a Frenchman, who was called Clement VI. Urban established himself at Rome ; Clement, under the protection of the French king, at Avignon. Each had his strong partisans ; neither would yield ; and hence the scandalous picture was presented of two Popes claiming an equal share in the indivisible authority of the headship of the Church. The Roman party elected three Pontiffs in succession to Urban, and the French, upon the death of Clement, elected in due form his successor. This schism rent the Church in twain, the Empire, England, and the nations of the North adhering to the Italian Pope, while France, Spain, Scotland, and

Sicily persisted in recognizing the French one. This schism, of course, resulted in the weakening of the papacy, especially in its claims to supremacy over the civil power.

The Councils which were held in order to heal the dissensions—those of Pisa, of Constance, and of Basle—took the opportunity not only of limiting the pretensions of the papacy itself, but of urging the necessity of the reform of many of the abuses by which it had become degraded, and which all parties at the time agreed in thinking had brought great scandal on the Church. The Council of Constance was composed not only of bishops, but of the chiefs of monasteries, of the ambassadors from many Christian princes, and of a multitude of doctors of law. Among other things, it decreed that this Council had, as a General Council, by Divine right an authority to which every rank, even the papal, must submit in matters of faith and in measures for the reform of the Church. There is, I believe, some doubt of the regularity of the decrees of the Council of Constance, or at least of their being universally binding on the Church, but there is no doubt whatever that its sessions formed an epoch since which the arrogant claims of the papacy to the control of the civil power as it had been exercised by so many of the mediæval Popes were no longer made. The thunder of excommunication was still often heard, but in faint mutterings, and it ceased to carry with it awe and terror as of old. Europe once more acknowledged a common Pope, but the power of

Gregory, of Innocent, and of Boniface was gone with the age in which they lived.

A reaction in the policy of the principal sovereigns of Europe in regard to papal claims is very striking during the first half of the fourteenth century. The rulers of the world seem with common consent at last to have made up their minds not to degrade the papacy, but to confine its jurisdiction within reasonable bounds. I have already spoken of the attitude of France in the controversy between Philip le Bel and Boniface, when the National Assembly of the country, the States-General, answered the appeal of their king by the declaration that the sovereign power of the monarch in France is such that none is above it save God alone. This was in 1302. A few years later, when Benedict XII. persisted in maintaining the excommunication which had been pronounced by his predecessor against Louis of Bavaria, the German Electoral Princes, three of whom were the foremost prelates of the country, did not hesitate to choose Louis Emperor notwithstanding this impediment, declaring that every election of Emperor was valid without the confirmation of the Pope. So in England, in the reign of Edward III., the intolerable exactions from which the people suffered, owing to the rapacity of the court of Rome, induced Parliament, as we have seen, to prohibit the admission or execution of papal briefs or bulls within the realm by the statute of *præmunire*, and to deny the papal claim to dispose of ecclesiastical benefices by the statute of *provisors*. From

this time forward the Popes made no effort to maintain their universal dominion by the means which Gregory VII. and so many of his successors had used.

Their ambition, it is true, was still directed towards schemes of temporal sovereignty, but the sphere in which it was conspicuous was Italy, and not the universal domain of Christendom. In that country they made the interests of the papacy subservient to the elevation of their kindred in rank and wealth. They were engaged, many of them, in all the intrigues of the profligate princes of Italy to secure the territorial rank of the members of their families in the bad age of the fifteenth century. The great scandal of the court of Rome in those days was the nepotism of the Popes. The awe and veneration which their character had inspired, even when they were most despotic in their schemes for exalting the authority of the Church, gradually faded out of men's minds when they found their policy guided by anxiety about Italian politics, and when they could so degrade their office as to engage in a vulgar strife in that country with men like the Visconti and the Sforzas and the Aragonese kings of the two Sicilies.

The personal character of most of the Popes in the fifteenth century further degraded the great office they held. Sixtus IV. and Alexander VI. (Borgia) are men in whom we seek in vain for any of the priestly virtues or any of the priestly courage of the earlier Popes. So sunken had the power of the papacy become before the

close of the fifteenth century that when Charles VIII. of France undertook his expedition against Naples in 1494 he paid no heed to the alliance which the Pope had made with his enemy the king of that country, but marched through Italy straight to the gates of Rome. He forced the Pope, whom he found in abject terror at his approach, not only to abandon an alliance with his enemies, but to recognize his claims as heir to the Duke of Anjou, and to give him feudal investiture of the kingdom of Naples, the suzerainty of which the Popes had long held. It is true that this Pope was a Borgia; but an act like this shows the decline not merely of the character but of the power of the great mediæval Popes.

It must not be thought that because the Popes declined in public estimation the Church in the same way lost its vigor. No bad examples and no worthless lives of individual Popes could root out the beliefs which had been growing in the mind of Europe for more than a thousand years. The perpetuity of the Church, notwithstanding the unworthiness of so many of its supreme Pontiffs, has often been spoken of as a striking evidence of its Divine origin. The sacredness of the priest was inalienable, indelible, altogether irrespective of his life, his habits, his personal holiness or unholiness. There might be secret murmurs at the avarice, pride, licentiousness of the priest; public opinion might even in some cases boldly hold him up to shame and obloquy; still, he was priest, bishop, Pope; his sacraments lost none of their efficacy, and his verdict of condemnation or of absolution was equally valid.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR ITALIAN NATIONALITY.

THE growth of a strong sentiment of nationality was one of the most important consequences of the conflict of social forces during the Middle Age. As the result of this evolution is one of the most original and characteristic features of our modern life, the process calls for careful study. It seems, at first sight, strange that from feudalism, an epoch which we are accustomed to regard as one essentially marked by local and separatist tendencies and possessing none of that power of cohesion which is essential to our ideal of a national life, the outgrowth should be an opposite condition of society, in which monarchy, centralization, and an intensely national spirit became the dominant principles. The contrast between the two eras in this respect is very striking, and the change is due to the gradual silent influence of common ideas germinating in its soil, weakening, as the Middle Age grew older, the foundations, and gradually crumbling away the external forms which suited the time, and substituting for them those better expressing the changed condition of feeling. We have spoken of some of those influences in describing the course of mediæval life in the principal countries of Europe. They all had at least this general tendency, that they bred discontent

and taught the people throughout Western Europe some common lessons concerning the improvement of their condition. To them any form of government was preferable to feudalism. Local self-government, as established in the free cities, was only a partial remedy. The kings and the free towns united to check the power of the feudal nobles; and from this strange combination has been developed a strong sentiment of nationality founded upon affinities of race and neighborhood.

This sentiment as it grew stronger not only destroyed feudalism, but it has become one of the most energetic forces in the government of the world. Do not let us mistake the meaning of this sentiment of nationality, lest we should be unable to explain the cause of its prodigious power. It does not mean that a mere aggregation of great numbers of human beings in a large district necessarily promotes the improvement of the race, or that such has ever been the belief of any portion of it. Such mere crowding together was the case in Babylon and in other populous districts in the East in antiquity. Vast multitudes were there enclosed, so to speak, in huge pens; but they were only like dumb cattle driven, and the more easily driven because they formed an unorganized mass. But the true sentiment of nationality is an ineradicable, vital, organic force, almost crushed out by the necessities of the Roman Imperial system and feudal rule, but reappearing in our modern life with such power that to us all that is best in life and civilization is inconceivable unless the means of preserving



both are found in the *nation*. It has nothing to do, and is often in direct conflict, with that love of conquest which has stirred men like Charlemagne and Louis XIV. and Napoleon to annex countries of different races and civilizations to their own. When, however, such men fight for the influence of the *race* to which they belong, and to extend the power of the nation as representing that race, they are its true representatives: their conquests stir the passions of their people, and they are supported by their strength.

Modern history is so full of illustrations of the working of this principle that it seems almost a political instinct. Ever since the germs of the three great nations of modern Europe—France, Germany, and Italy—were planted by the treaty of Verdun, in 843, on the division of Charlemagne's dominions among his descendants, the tendency towards the consolidation of each of these three countries into separate and strong nationalities has been, notwithstanding the intensely unnational character of feudalism, incessantly active, so that it may be regarded as a powerful agent in European politics for more than a thousand years. In each of these countries the sentiment has dictated their policy, internal and external, and, whatever else has changed in them, it has proved a force in government always ineradicable, persistent, and aggressive. Through countless struggles the instinct of nationality in each has forced its way and gained at last its triumph. The nationality of France was established on a solid basis in the time of Louis

XIV., which has never been since shaken, notwithstanding all the changes in the form of its government. Germany and Italy have each become a nation in our own day. Germany was proclaimed a true Empire of people of German race and speech (very unlike the Holy Roman Empire) in 1871, after her marvellous conquests in France, in that very hall of the palace at Versailles the walls of which are covered with pictures representing the triumph of the French race over the German. Italy became a nation in any true sense since the downfall of the Western Roman Empire in 476, when Victor Emmanuel, in our own day, brought its various provinces under his sway and ruled from Rome what was truly Italy,—that is, a country extending from the Alps to the Adriatic.

I propose to speak of the history of Italy with reference to this unity and nationality which have so recently become *faits accomplis*. I must try to show that this sentiment of nationality was really at all times the ruling idea of the best minds of all parties in that country, as in other countries of Europe, and to explain the formidable nature of the obstacles which prevented that idea from becoming a practical reality in the form of a national government until our own time. The real history of Italy I suppose to be an account of her terrible struggle to reach such a national unity ever since the fall of the Western Empire. Her kingdom is the last-born of modern States, but the history of her early and persistent struggles to found it is most interesting

and instructive. When we think of it, we recall the famous lines of Lord Byron, modelled upon a verse of one of her own poets :

“Italia! O Italia! thou who hast  
The fatal gift of beauty, which became  
A funeral dower of present woes and past,  
On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,  
And annals graved in characters of flame.”

In these lines there is a striking image of the true history of Italy. Her beauty attracted strangers, and they fought for her possession. It was not merely that she had to struggle against those invaders who sought to despoil her. Alas! she was forced too often, in her weakness, to look as a mere spectator upon the wars between the rudest barbarians on her own soil, in which her only interest was to know to which of the combatants she would fall as the prize. As she was the most tempting of all the provinces of the Empire, so she became the earliest prey of the barbarians, and suffered perhaps more and for a longer period than any other from their unchecked domination. During a period of about five hundred years, beginning A.D. 396, the Visigoths, the Burgundians, the Vandals, the Huns, the Ostrogoths, the Franks, the Lombards, the Normans, and the Saracens occupied in turn large portions of her territory, and ruled the remnant of the population which Roman wars and Roman maladministration had left in Italy by the same brute force which the

forefathers of these Italians had employed towards those tribes on the frontiers of the Empire, whose children had now come to avenge their old wrongs.

In telling this sad story of desolation and suffering it is hard to know where, within the limits of a single chapter, to begin. The Lombard invasion, which took place about the close of the sixth century, was perhaps the most formidable and the most permanent in its influence of all the barbarian inroads. The Lombard domination lasted in Italy for more than two hundred years, and under it was established there that feudal system which the invaders brought from Germany, and which their Teutonic fellow-countrymen adopted later in all those portions of Europe which formed the Empire of Charlemagne. After the invasion, and during the occupation by the Lombards, Italy was divided into three distinct portions, each governed by a separate power. The Lombards were supreme in the north and in the country west of the Apennines, holding, besides, the important duchies of Spoleto in the middle and Beneventum in the south. The Roman Empire, or rather that shadow of its great name which was to be found at Constantinople, ruled the country on the shores of the Adriatic, a district which was called, in official language, the Exarchate of Ravenna, and the Popes were really the controlling power in the Duchy of Rome, although nominally they were subject to the Emperors at Constantinople. Besides these, there was a number of maritime cities, even then rising into importance by their

commerce, such as Venice, Gaeta, Naples, and Amalfi, which, being out of the reach of the Lombards, were practically independent and self-governing.

By the Lombards Italy was regarded for a long time as the spoil of war only. By the conquest two-thirds of the lands of the population had been transferred to the invaders, and the other third, owing to cruel and bad government, was rendered almost unproductive. The timid representative of the Emperor at Constantinople abandoned all attempt to succor the populations which were at least nominally subject to his master, and shut himself up in Ravenna, protected from attack by the morasses which surrounded it. The only living and real authority recognized by any was the moral one,—that of the Church. It was the moral, not the officially recognized, authority of the Church which could say to a people ground down by the exactions of both Greeks and Lombards, “Come to us if you have any dispute the decision of which you are afraid to trust to the barbarians, and we will try and settle it on principles of equity. If you complain that you cannot trade for fear of the pillage of the lords, come again to us, and here, even in the sacred precincts of the convent, you shall buy and sell freely under the Church’s protection. You complain that these lords pursue you often with murderous intent. If so, come to us, and we will open for your refuge the churches, and there you shall be safe from their fury.”

We soon see how strong this power of the Church

became in these troublous times. In the middle of the eighth century, the Pope, finding his position an embarrassing, not to say an impossible, one between a Greek Emperor who threatened to destroy all the images used in the churches in Italy, and a Lombard king who threatened to capture Rome, applied first to Charles Martel, and afterwards to Pepin, his son, Kings of the Franks, for succor. The result was such as I have described more than once in previous chapters. The Lombards and the Greeks were defeated by the Franks, the Exarchate was conferred upon the Pope, and this donation, and not that of Constantine (falsely so called), was the basis of the temporal power of the Popes as recognized by the public law of Europe. The work of the Frankish conquerors was completed in the next reign, that of Charlemagne, who extinguished both the Greek and the Lombard dominion in Italy, and became, at Christmas, 800, by his alliance with the Pope, not only Emperor of the world, but King of Italy also. From that day until 1870, when Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed, at Rome, King of Italy, and as a result of the work done on that Christmas day, Italy was ruled by foreigners, or the policy of her different princes was dictated by foreign influence. Her history, as I have said before, is the history of a never-ceasing, and, for many centuries, a vain, struggle to rid herself of them.

As kings of Italy the successors of Charlemagne were the feudal overlords of the country; and the harshness of their rule was to a certain extent modified by their

alliance with the Church, while as Emperors they did not hesitate from time to time to purify the Church by preventing the chair of St. Peter from being desecrated by unworthy persons who sought to occupy it. The germs of the feudal system, which had been planted in Italy by the Lombards, were fully developed by the Franks. Vast tracts of territory were granted to the principal warriors among the nobles, who had an absolute authority over the inhabitants of the lands which were held of them.

The country, and especially strong military positions throughout it, was covered with castles, and they became posts of defence for these lords against their neighbors. In the previous invasions of the barbarians the walls of the towns had been levelled, but now the towns were permitted by their lords to rebuild them, because they were needed for their defence against the Normans, the Avars, and the Saracens, who from time to time for more than three centuries made fierce inroads into this unhappy country. This rebuilding of the walls of the towns forms an epoch in the history of the country, for it enabled the cities afterwards to combine and resist the arbitrary authority not only of the neighboring lords, but also of their German masters. The successors of Charlemagne, of all the three dynasties, always insisted upon their feudal suzerainty, and, what was of more practical importance, upon the feudal tribute due them as kings of Italy. During eighty years, from 960 to 1040, the German kings of Italy entered that country

twelve times at the head of large armies. They encamped on the celebrated plain of Roncaglia near Placentia, and there held meetings of their Italian feudatories, similar to the *Champs de Mai* which they were accustomed to hold in Germany, and proclaimed laws for the government of the country, receiving the homage of their vassals, and collecting the tribute payable to them as a feudal due. As the chief object of the Emperors on these expeditions was to secure the money payments due from their vassals, they troubled themselves very little, if these were promptly made, with any claim to local authority which their vassals, nobles or cities, might set up.

In the long absences of their German masters the towns in Lombardy, especially Milan, Pavia, Cremona, Brescia, Padua, and Mantua, had established in each a local self-governing body, and they were all, at least in the beginning, bound by an alliance to defend the privileges which each claimed as against the Emperor. This Lombard League, as it was called, had become so powerful that it defied the authority of the Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, even when its two principal members, Milan and Pavia, were contending for the leadership of the League. Frederick, for the sake of vindicating his own feudal rights as well as those of the great vassals of Lombardy who were too feeble from their want of organization to resist the demands of the towns, determined to destroy this Lombard League. Milan suffered with her allies from his fury during three campaigns, and at last, when that illustrious city was taken (1162),



not only its walls but all its buildings were, by order of the conqueror, razed to the ground. But the heroic example of Milan stimulated the resistance of the other Lombard cities, and, although the Emperor strove to overcome it for many years, he at last failed. The decisive battle (which in its results is one of the most important in history) was that of Legnano in 1176, in which the Germans and their Italian allies were wholly defeated by the army of the Lombard League, and this battle was followed by the peace of Constance, in which the Emperor renounced all the regal authority he had claimed within the cities, acknowledging their right to levy armies, and to build fortifications, and to administer the law as they saw proper within their own jurisdiction. On the other hand, they agreed to pay him two thousand marks in silver for the purchase of certain of his feudal claims, he retaining a nominal sovereignty over them. "Thus was terminated," says Sismondi, "the first and most noble struggle ever maintained by the nations of modern Europe against despotism." Their position legally, after the peace of Constance, was that of subjects of a limited instead of an absolute monarchy.

Two things are specially to be noted in this conflict: first, that the Pope, Alexander III., against whom the Emperor had set up an antipope, sided with the insurgents. The fortress built by the Lombard League as the most effectual barrier to the advance of Frederick in Italy was that of Alexandria, so called after the Pope, thus honorably identifying the papacy with this first

struggle for Italian independence. Then, again, during these wars the party names of Guelph and Ghibeline first became used in Italy, although originally they had nothing Italian about them. The Guelphs in Germany were originally the partisans of the houses of Saxony and Bavaria. In Italy the friends of the Pope and of Italian independence assumed that name. The Ghibelines in Germany were the friends of the house of Swabia, or Hohenstauffen, to which the Emperor Frederick belonged, but in Italy all who favored Imperial rights and pretensions in that country were called Ghibelines.

The efforts of the house of Hohenstauffen to maintain its authority in Italy did not end, unfortunately, at the peace of Constance. At the death of Frederick Barbarossa, his grandson, Frederick II., inherited from his mother Constance, the heiress of the last Norman king of Sicily, all the possessions of that house, which included not only the island of Sicily, but that portion of Southern Italy known in modern times as the kingdom of Naples. On his father's side he was heir of the vast domain of the Hohenstauffens, in Germany, and, besides, he was elected by the German Diet Emperor. No Emperor since Charlemagne's time had had such vast hereditary possessions. Being thus Emperor and King of Naples and Sicily, it was plain that the temporal authority of the Popes, who had long been regarded as the liege lords of the Norman kings of the two Sicilies, would become endangered. The Pope, it seemed probable, would be reduced by the attitude of Frederick

in Italy to the position of a spiritual ruler only. We may easily conceive that Innocent III., who was on the pontifical throne when Frederick of Sicily reached manhood, was very unwilling that the vast designs which subsequent events prove he was then meditating for the advancement of the papacy should fail for want of power in the head of the Church. It must be remembered too that in the opinion of the Italian Guelphs the Pope was as naturally and properly the head of their party as he was the head of the Church. It was this sentiment mainly, I think, which gave rise to the second attempt of the Italians to drive the Germans out of their country. It seems an echo from the distant past of the famous war-cry of our own times,—“*Italia farà da se.*” This time it was the independence of the Pope, not as the spiritual father, but as an Italian prince, which was menaced, and it was maintained by the towns, or many of them, as previously the claim had been the independence of these towns themselves, which was supported by all the power of the Pope.

Frederick II. was the most modern of mediæval sovereigns brought into collision with the most mediæval of all Popes, Innocent III. and Gregory IX. While he was asserting his rights in Italy against the claims of the Pope, he treated him as the head of a Guelphic league, the object of which was to increase his temporal power in Italy at the expense of that of the Emperor, just as he would have treated any hostile sovereign in arms against him. Frederick II. is, next to Charlemagne, the most

attractive and interesting figure among all the Emperors. So far as culture was concerned, his reign opened a new era in Italy. It was at his court at Palermo that the Italian language assumed its definitive form. Inspired doubtless by the example of the Saracens, his predecessors there, he founded schools and universities; he encouraged men distinguished for their learning; he spoke with facility six different languages; he had that delicacy of taste characteristic of the scholars of Southern Europe; he was fond of philosophical studies, which probably led him to doubt concerning the sacredness of the Church and the sanctity of the Popes of those days. But he was unable, after a struggle of thirty years, to overcome the Popes, supported by their spiritual power, and aided by the strength of the Guelphic cities of Italy, and he died in 1250, having vainly striven to expiate his sins against the Church by engaging in a Crusade. He left the cities of Italy such as his grandfather had made them by the peace of Constance, a multitude of petty independent republics, each with the seed of dissolution planted within it by the rivalries of the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines. From his death German Emperors ceased to rule in Italy as the predecessors of Frederick Barbarossa had done. The posterity of Frederick II. met with the most determined hostility on the part of the Popes in their hereditary dominion of the two Sicilies, and the house of Hohenstauffen, ceasing to reign either in Germany or in Italy, became shortly afterwards extinct.

Thus, so far as national unity was concerned, Italy was in a more hopeless condition after the last heir of the house of Hohenstauffen was publicly executed at Naples in 1268 than she had been since the fall of the Western Empire in 476. The power within her limits which was not wielded by the Pope as the head of the Guelphic cities and as administrator of the kingdom of the two Sicilies was held either by a vast number of towns, each forming a petty sovereign republic, or by nobles, who possessed the strongest castles and the largest estates in the open country.

The history of the next two centuries in Italy is the history of the downfall of these petty republics, and their transformation into hereditary principalities which became vested in the most considerable of these families, such as those of Visconti and Sforza at Milan, Malatesta at Rimini, Gonzaga at Mantua, Este at Ferrara, Medici at Florence, Doria at Genoa, La Scala at Verona, etc. There are said to have been nearly two hundred of these city republics in Italy at the close of the thirteenth century. Their form of government, if we except that at Venice, was substantially the same. They were governed by councils,—or *signoria*, as they were called in Florence,—composed of persons who were elected in these, as in all the free cities throughout Europe, by the burghers, properly so called. Their citizenship was an hereditary right, derived from those by whom it had been first acquired. In many of these cities the ancient nobility found a place. What

genuine oligarchies these cities really became may be judged from the statement that in Florence and in Venice there were about five thousand burghers in a population of one hundred thousand ; and this was about the proportion which was maintained in the other cities. The mass of the population, therefore, had nothing to do with the government of the city : representation in our modern sense of all classes being unknown, the avowed object was to establish within the city an aristocracy in its primitive sense,—the government of the best.

Among these various city republics, large and small, scattered over Italy, there was, moreover, no confederation, although leagues for making war against a common enemy were not unusual. The master-feeling in all of them was pride in their own independence and jealousy of their neighbors. There was a perpetual desire of usurping the rights of these neighbors, and of extending their power over those cities which were weaker than themselves. These cities became the hotbeds of the political intrigues and ambition of certain families among the burghers who aspired to control their policy. There was perpetual tumult and fighting between rival factions. No injustice or cruelty or crime was regarded as forbidden, if by committing such acts the objects of the crafty politician might be gained. Wholesale confiscations, and the exile of all the principal members of the unsuccessful party, were measures commonly resorted to. The history of all the so-called republic cities of Italy, from that of Florence down through that of

Pisa, Genoa, and Milan, to the smallest of them, is a history of the selfish struggles of the leaders in each to gain the supremacy. If we looked only upon this side of the history of these republics, we should be inclined to think that they were cursed with the worst government known to civilized man, far worse than even the arbitrary despotism of feudalism, because in Italy the tyrants of the cities and their policy were constantly changing. And yet we are obliged to say that this very period was the era of unsurpassed prosperity in these towns, notwithstanding the disorder caused by the constant strife of factions within them.

At no period was party spirit more violent than during the thirteenth century; yet at that very time the prosperity not only of the towns themselves, but of the districts outside of them but under their government, is said to have been prodigious and in striking contrast with the condition of the rest of Europe, where nothing but poverty and barbarism was to be found. To this period belongs the great work of irrigating the plains of Lombardy by canals, undertaken at the expense of the city of Milan; and this, with certain improvements introduced about the same time in Tuscany, marks the first traces of scientific agriculture, except the works of the Saracens in the south of Spain, to be found in Europe. This, too, was the era of the construction of the great architectural works in the towns, which even now excite wonder and admiration. Not only the great palaces and churches by which Florence

is distinguished were then built, but town-halls, bridges, aqueducts, and other works of public utility there and elsewhere throughout Italy. The nobles and wealthy burghers lived in houses conspicuous for their beauty, elegance, and comfort, while the kings of the North still dwelt in rude castles, where everything was sacrificed to making them places of defence. The inhabitant of Paris wandered helplessly about his town through narrow passages filled with mud and filth long after the citizen of Florence was provided with broad and well-paved streets. The fine arts and literature were not neglected, although the period of the later Renaissance was yet one hundred and fifty years distant. The celebrated bronze gates of the Baptistery at Florence were cast at a time when the government of that city was fiercely disputed by rival factions; and in the same era Cimabue and Giotto revived the art of painting, and Dante wrote *La Divina Commedia*.

The vast wealth of which such a civilization was the outgrowth was due partly to habits of industry, which met with a rich reward, and partly to the vast and profitable commerce which was carried on by the maritime republics, Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence, with the East. These towns became the entrepôts of the movable wealth of Europe. To them came all the merchants of the North and West, who supplied the wants of the people of those regions in all that ministered to a taste for luxury and refinement. The Genoans and Pisans established trading-posts at numerous places on the Black



Sea ; and the most important islands in the Archipelago belonged to the Venetians. Small as these republics were, their wealth and commerce gave them the position of most important ruling powers in Europe during the Middle Age. With our modern notions that prosperity is inseparably connected with an honest, just, and firm rule, we find it difficult to explain this strange spectacle which the history of the Italian city republics presents of bad government united with apparent prosperity. We must remember, however, that there was one sentiment common to all the rival factions within them, and that was an intense pride in the greatness and supremacy of their own particular town, and an earnest determination to maintain it. The large spirit of national patriotism was hardly felt in Italy during the Middle Age, as it had not been even among the most enlightened nations of antiquity. Its place was supplied by an intense municipal feeling, the product of a narrow local sentiment which the natural and political divisions of the country often stimulated to a degree fatal to good government, to peace, and even to honor. They used to say at Venice, Venetians first, Christians afterwards, and then, last of all, Italians ; and such was substantially the feeling at Milan, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence. While every ambitious man within them strove to raise himself to power, all struggled to maintain the supremacy of their town without its walls, and to promote the glory of its civilization within them. No civilization in modern times has anything like the brilliancy of that

of these Italian towns during at least two centuries; but we may say now, with confidence, that because it had no root in the eternal truths of right and justice, it withered away.

These republics all, with the exception of Venice, perished and became principalities, the heritage of one of the great families dwelling within them and who had been intrusted with their defence, from two causes: first, the necessity of confiding to professional military leaders and to mercenary soldiers the force which was intended for the protection of the town against rival factions within it, and for making expeditions against its neighbors; and, secondly, the absolute control which the force so constituted soon exercised over the city. Of course, with such an army there was but one step from being its leader to becoming the ruler of the State.

Whatever the Italian republics had gained during their era of prosperity, it is clear that they had not learned how to resist successfully their own domestic tyrants. These tyrants, as they are called in the Greek sense that they gained power by illegal means, were so numerous that with reference to the methods which they took to raise themselves to power on the ruins of these republics they have been classified into six varieties. But they were all alike usurpers and betrayers of the trust confided to them. They were usually foreign knights, and the title given to them was that of *Podestà*. These men so called to this office, whether they were great feudal lords or vicars of the Empire, or captains

of the people so called, or leaders of the *condottieri*, or nephews of Popes, or merely eminent burghers like the Medici, all abused the unlimited powers intrusted to them, and sought to establish family dynasties on the ruins of these republics.

Such is the origin of all the great noble families of modern Italy. Their policy for more than two centuries was not unlike that of the republics they destroyed,—viz., to add to their own possessions at the expense of their weaker neighbors. But, the republics once gone, civic pride and civic prosperity went with them, and history does not present an example in Europe of the rapid degeneracy of a people as striking as that presented by Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries under the government of the family dynasties founded by these tyrants. The first care of each usurper was to disarm the citizens, who, long accustomed to the pursuits of trade, were in truth not usually inclined to serious resistance, and to supply their places with a force of heavy cavalry, chiefly composed of Germans, who it was supposed, being ignorant of the language of the towns in which they were stationed, besides being mere professional soldiers, would be faithful to their chiefs. But these rude warriors soon found out that it would be easier for them to plunder for themselves than to divide the spoil with a master. They formed themselves into companies under the command of *condottieri*, or hired captains, and offered their services to those who would pay the highest price for them, with perfect indifference

as to the party or the cause for which they were fighting. Thus, in 1343, a roving troop of these adventurers, calling themselves "The Great Company," under the command of a German, Count Werner, was organized in Lombardy, with the following significant motto graven on their corselets: "Enemy of God, of Pity, and of Mercy." These banditti, instead of being extirpated by those whom they threatened to plunder, became the most useful auxiliaries employed by the allied princes of Lombardy against the Visconti of Milan. Their trade proved so profitable that companies of *condottieri* made up exclusively of *Italians* were afterwards formed, thus making their own countrymen their prey. For more than twenty years all the wars in Italy were carried on by these robbers, who divided themselves into distinct bands with the purpose of giving employment in the various quarrels which arose among the different princes to all members of the profession. To this practice of enlisting mercenary troops, which was continued on a large scale for a hundred and fifty years, the great Machiavelli attributes the conquest of Italy by foreigners during the sixteenth century. A native military force and organization based on the national principles which gave strength to the invading armies was until recent times unknown in Italy.

As the time approached when the control of that country was to be fought for by the great powers,—France, Germany, and Spain,—the Italian princes were becoming gradually weaker, owing to their expending

their force in constant quarrels among themselves. Many of them were men of distinguished character and ability, who, had they pursued any other course than that of maintaining themselves and their families in power by destroying the life of their own country, would have left a great name in history.

The ideal Italian prince, the legitimate successor of the *condottieri*, seems such a monster, as he is portrayed in the pages of Machiavelli, that his book *Il Principe* was long looked upon as a romance, and the typical prince he describes as an impossible being. Further and modern researches have shown, however, that his pictures were genuine portraits of men he had known and served. It is true that the particular model who sat for the portrait of the Italian prince was Cæsar Borgia, a man steeped in every vice which can deform or corrupt the human heart. History, unfortunately, teaches us the sad truth that a man may have been as depraved as Machiavelli has described Borgia and yet have been an accomplished Italian prince in the fifteenth century. He needed, for instance, no principle of morality, although he must be *religious*, with the understanding that religion then meant mere conformity to the order of the Church, and that it was entirely divorced from the restraint of morality. A country, large or small, in the possession of a prince, was merely so much capital in his hands, and his business was with that capital to make the most out of it he could for his own personal advantage. Machiavelli's views as to the best method of subjugating

free cities—the practical business question of his day—seem only a faithful reproduction of the course pursued by these tyrants in the destruction of the Italian republics. He sums up his views of government with this wise apothegm, the fruit of his long and bitter experience: It is safer for a ruler *to be feared than to be loved*. “Put no faith in the pretended love of men,” he says. “When it is their interest they will serve you, and when you count on their gratitude they will desert you. If you wish to succeed, keep no faith when it is harmful to do so: it is not necessary that a prince should be merciful, loyal, humane, religious, just; on the contrary, an exhibition of these qualities will usually be harmful, but” (and here is that homage which, happily, by the very constitution of the human heart, Virtue always forces Vice to pay her) “the prince must always *seem* to have them.”

The value of these opinions of Machiavelli for us consists in this, that they give us the true explanation of the motives which produced those acts of cruelty, tyranny, and force, and that life of utter self-indulgence, depravity, and corruption, which characterize the era of the rule of the Italian princes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We must keep our eyes steadily fixed on this condition as the source of all the evils that overwhelmed the Italian people during this epoch. We are sometimes, I think, in danger of misconceiving the true character of this time. Italy, in the age of these tyrants, was a country of strange contrasts. With all the

frightful horrors of a despotism carried out on the principles which I have just described are found in close juxtaposition so many traces of a brilliant culture, and one so much in advance of any other in Europe at that time, that we naturally incline to dwell rather on the bright than on the dark side of the picture. These tyrants were nearly all munificent patrons of learning and of the fine arts; and it is this, I doubt not, which has saved them from being ranked in history with such monsters as Tiberius and Nero and Caligula. When we think of the Visconti of Milan, the building of the famous cathedral in that city, of the Certosa at Pavia, and the restoration of the university, works which were all due to that family, make us forget for the moment that its members were a brood of ferocious tyrants, who, not content with usurping the government of the free towns of Lombardy, aspired to bring all Italy under their cruel sway. When we speak of another of these tyrants, Malatesta of Rimini, we remember rather that he encouraged literature and delighted in the society of artists; that he was an amiable enthusiast as a student of Greek literature, going so far as to dig up the body of a celebrated scholar from his native Greek soil and causing it to be transported to Rimini, where it was preserved in the cathedral as a relic. We remember these things, I say; but, strange to say, we forget that this was the same man who was impeached at Rome for heresy, parricide, incest, adultery, rape, and sacrilege. So in regard to the Medici. We love to think of them as the

true fathers of the Renaissance in Italy. We recall with a glow of pleasure that famous description of Lorenzo the Magnificent at his villa near Fiesole. "In that villa," says Hallam, "overhanging the towers of Florence, in gardens which Tully might have envied, with Ficino, Landino, and Politian at his side, he delighted his hours of leisure with the beautiful visions of the Platonic philosophy for which the summer stillness of an Italian sky appears the most congenial accompaniment." While we do this, we forget the stern but unheeded voice of Savonarola, as he whispered in the dying tyrant's ear, "Restore liberty to Florence." And so with the Popes of the fifteenth century; we are blinded by the brilliancy of the scholarship and the love of profane learning exhibited by such men as Nicholas V., the founder in modern times of public libraries, or Pius II., who, as Æneas Sylvius, was the most distinguished Greek scholar of his day, and we do not think of their nepotism, or of the efforts which they and their immediate successors made to establish, like the princes around them, ruling dynasties in their own families. Nothing is clearer, unfortunately, in history than that the encouragement of the arts and of learning may coexist with the most thorough despotism in a government and with flagrant corruption in morals. The age of Augustus in the ancient world, and that of Louis XIV. in the modern, teach us the same truth on this subject as the history of Italy under its princes and Popes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.



But the day of vengeance was fast approaching, and the Italian governments, such as I have described them, were soon to be at the mercy of the power of the Northern nations.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century the principal powers of Italy were those of the Sforza, ruling over Lombardy and Genoa; the republic of Venice; Florence, under the house of the Medici; the Romagna, under the Orsini and Colonna and John Borgia; the Pope; and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, under the house of Aragon. Each was striving for the mastery, and, as if to illustrate the truth of the proverb, *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*, Charles VIII., King of France, was called in not only by the Sforza at Milan alone, but by Savonarola himself at Florence, to restore order. His own pretext was a claim to the throne of Naples as the heir of the house of Anjou; and such was the weakness of the various governments that he marched from one end of Italy to the other without meeting any serious opposition, and took possession of the Neapolitan kingdom. Wars then began, not between him and the Italian princes, but between France and the rival kings of Spain and Germany. This struggle continued until Italy became, in the language of diplomacy, "a mere geographical expression," a field for the exercise of the power of nations all of whom were equally strangers to her soil and hostile to the development of her national life.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MONASTICISM, CHIVALRY, AND THE CRUSADES.

IF we seek to understand fully the characteristics of any historical epoch, we must not confine ourselves to a study merely of the outward form of the organization of its government and institutions. Two very important things at least in the history of an age we shall be unable to discover in this way,—one its stream of tendency, and the other its capacity for growth. Very often in history we find that the spirit and the true life long remain, while the outward form by which that life was manifested at a particular epoch has become wholly decayed. What, of course, we seek to learn in history is the substance, and not the form, of a particular development; what survives and expands, and not what perishes in the using. With this object in view, we must extend somewhat the survey we have been taking of the Middle Age. A simple account of that formal organization of the Church and the State which grew up in Europe from the mingling of the Roman and Christian society with the barbarian element does not suffice to explain fully the nature of that peculiar form of social life which was adopted by the whole of Western Europe from the fall of the Empire to the close of the Crusades. There was an inner life, not always manifested in the

external forms, a life resting on definite principles, on certain dogmas, and on common habits, the whole forming a perfectly homogeneous and unique type, controlled by a sentiment resembling what is now called public opinion as distinct from formal law.

There are three peculiarities of that life, or rather three influences acting on and moulding it in its various phases, of which I propose to speak in this chapter. These three influences are Monasticism, Chivalry, and the Crusades. Without the constant presence and power of these indirect forces I do not see how the feudal system, as I have described its relations to Church and State, could have so long continued as a form of government. These institutions, it seems to me, had much to do with what was fundamental and real in the life of the Middle Age. Their special and controlling influence is manifest in every part of its history. A portion of it at least has survived, and has come down to us as a legacy; and perhaps when we speak with contempt of the outward features of the feudal system we sometimes forget how much we are controlled by the spirit which gave that system life.

Monasticism then, in the Middle Age, may be considered in one sense as the strong and earnest expression of the feeling of the time concerning the best method by which the clergy could perform their duties to their fellow-men; chivalry, as embodying the Middle-Age conception of the ideal life of the only class outside the clergy who had any real power, the knights; while the

Crusades were the outcome of a combination between monasticism and knighthood,—the object proposed by this combination, the glory and supremacy of the Church, being, in the opinion of the times, the grandest and worthiest to which either priest or layman could aspire. These three streams of influence are not only those which gave its true and best life to the feudal system and to the Middle Age while it lasted, but the spirit which informed that life characterizes whatever remains to us of that system which has been incorporated in our modern society.

The practice of monasticism arose in the first instance from an earnest desire of devotees to lead a religious life of ideal purity and excellence. This practice has not been confined to those who held the Christian faith. In all ages of the world, in all countries, and in nearly all religions, there has been one form of the religious life for the few, and another for the many, although the same religious creed or belief was common to both classes. In most of the religions of the world the line which separated these two classes was that upon one side of which was found asceticism in its highest sense as the rule and practice of religious life, and on the other side a thoroughly orthodox belief combined with a practice by which the ordinary duties of life could be performed and its pleasures enjoyed without a consciousness of violating the obligations of duty. There seems to be a universal natural instinct which has led men to believe, at all times, that in the loftiest conception of the religious

life there was an irreconcilable hostility between the flesh and the spirit,—a form of Manicheism which we meet all through history, and which indeed formed the basis of most of the heresies of the Middle Age. The sacred books of Brahma and of Boudha recognize this distinction as fundamental, and they enjoin seclusion from the world and a great variety of acts of penance and self-mortification as highly meritorious, prescribing their observance as the sure method by which the devotee shall be absorbed at last into the Divine fountain of all being. So among the Jews, as is well known, there were ascetic sects, the Essenes and the Therapeutæ, who sought by seclusion from the world and by keeping under the fleshly appetites to secure the Divine favor. The same principle, the aim of which was Divine perfection, is found in many Oriental religions, and even among the warlike Saracens, who had their cloistered monks and their dervishes.

Christian monasticism had its rise in Egypt, a land, above all others, where, from the days of the Ptolemies, religious sects and opinions have met in perpetual conflict. The first Christian monks (who were laymen) adopted the solitary life of hermits about the beginning of the fourth century. Their earnest and well-meant but mistaken effort was to preserve the original purity of the Christian Church by transplanting it into the wilderness. The moral corruption of the Roman Empire, which was nominally Christian but was essentially heathen in the whole framework of its society, the oppressiveness of

the Imperial taxes, the extremes of despotism and slavery, of extravagant luxury and hopeless poverty, the decay of all productive energy in science and the arts, the threatening incursions of the barbarians on the frontiers, and, above all, the profound belief that the end of the world and the judgment-day were at hand, combined to produce in the most earnest minds a desire to seek relief in seclusion from the world.

The second stage of monasticism was *cenobitic* or cloister life, a substitution of the social for the solitary form of devotion. Under this form many monasteries, both for men and for women, grew up in Egypt, each with a complete organization and each governed by the strictest discipline, the time of the inmates being divided between acts of devotion and such labor as would support the members of the community. The Eastern monasteries, however, never became great working establishments, such as we find later in the West. Like all Oriental people, those who fled to the desert to worship led a solitary life by preference, exclusively absorbed in the contemplation of the Divine life, hoping thereby, and by constant self-denial and the mortification of the flesh, to reach the ideal condition of Christian perfection.

When, however, the zeal for the monastic life extended to Western Europe, its organization and methods were much modified by the practical minds of men like St. Jerome and St. Augustine, trained by Roman law and in Roman traditions. There were many monasteries in

the West before the time of St. Benedict of Nursia (A.D. 480); but he has been rightly considered the father of Western monasticism, for he not only founded an order to which many religious houses became attached, but he established a rule for their government which, in its main features, was adopted as the rule of monastic life by all the orders for more than five centuries, or until the time of St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi.

Benedict was first a hermit, living in the mountains of Southern Italy, and in that region he afterwards established in succession twelve monasteries, each with twelve monks and a superior. In the year 520 he founded the great monastery of Monte Casino as the mother-house of his order, a house which became the most celebrated and powerful monastery, according to Montalembert, in the Catholic universe, celebrated especially because there Benedict prepared his rule and formed the type which was to serve as a model to the innumerable communities submitting to it as a sovereign code. By that rule each monastery was to be governed absolutely, or at least in the sense in which a bishop governs his clergy, by an abbot elected by the monks, who were to be admitted as such only after a long novitiate and upon pronouncing a solemn vow. By this vow the candidate promised, among other things, to maintain poverty, chastity, and obedience to the abbot. These were always the conditions of monastic life; their observance, and the obligation of the monks to lead a life of self-denial and labor both of body and mind,

were enforced by very strict discipline under the Benedictine rule. Neither in the East nor in the West were the monks originally ecclesiastics; and it was not until the eighth century that they became priests, called regulars, in contrast with the ordinary parish clergy, who were called seculars. As missionaries, they proved the most powerful instruments in extending the authority and the boundaries of the Church. The monk had no individual property: even his dress belonged to the monastery. He was required to work, on the principle that an idle monk has ten devils to contend with, while a hard-working one has but a single one. To enable him to work efficiently, it was necessary to feed him well; and such was the injunction of Benedict, as opposed to the former practice of strict asceticism.

In less than a century after the death of Benedict the conquests of the barbarians in Italy, Gaul, and Spain were reconquered for civilization, and the vast territories of England, Germany, and Scandinavia were incorporated into Christendom or opened as fields for missionary labor. In this bright chapter of the history of the Dark Ages the monks of the rule of St. Benedict were the most conspicuous actors, and to them is due much of the progress which was made. The most illustrious Popes of those days, Leo and Gregory, had been monks; and when they became the heads of the Church, they made use to its fullest extent of the capacity of their brethren for labor among the heathen. I need not go over again the story of the conversion



of the Anglo-Saxons by St. Augustine, or that of the Germans by St. Boniface, but we must remember that both of these men were monks, sent on their mission by a Pope who had been a monk, and that to their zeal and practical statesmanship is due not merely the form but the stability of the organization of Christianity in those countries.

The Benedictine monk was in the truest sense the pioneer of civilization and Christianity in those regions where it was dangerous even for armed men to go. Moreover, it was he who, in his cloister, with the incessant din of arms around him, preserved and transcribed ancient manuscripts, both Christian and pagan, and who recorded his observations of current events, thus giving us the best materials we now possess for the history of remote times. The first musicians, farmers, painters, and statesmen in Europe, after the downfall of Imperial Rome and during the invasions of the barbarians, were monks. Whatever of earnestness, zeal, activity, and true statesmanship, combined with the self-denying spirit of Christianity, we observe for nearly five centuries of European history, we may regard, if not as the actual work of monks, yet as done under their influence and direction.

The monastic system, like all others, had its period of prosperous activity, to be followed by that of decline. The monasteries became very rich, and although, of course, individual monks still possessed no property, yet after the death of Charlemagne and until the close of

the eleventh century they suffered from the inevitable corruption of pride and laziness. Their zeal thus became cooled, and their energies diverted from the work which the Church had assigned them. Their real power and influence were gone with their poverty. And yet so persistent was the general belief in the value, both to the Church and the world, of a true type of monkhood, that good men in the darkest days prayed for its restoration.

Just then appeared the greatest reformer of the abuses of the monastic life, if not the greatest monk in history, St. Bernard (1091–1153). He revived the practice in the monastery of Cîteaux, which he first entered, and in that of Clairvaux, which he afterwards founded, of the sternest discipline which had been enjoined by St. Benedict. He became the ideal type of the perfect monk, enthusiastic, ardent, austere, intolerant, forgetting himself, and wholly filled with a burning zeal for the triumph of the Church. His theory and practice were that society, the family, all human interests, were nothing; the Church everything. The power which a true monk, according to the standard of those days, might wield over the minds of the people is shown by the variety of offices St. Bernard was asked to fill. He was not a Pope, but he was greater than any Pope of his day, and for nearly half a century the history of the Christian Church is the history of the influence of one monk, the Abbot of Clairvaux. He was appointed by the King of France to decide which of the candidates for the papacy, Innocent II. or Anacletus, had been canonically elected. At

the request of the Knights Templar, he drew up the original statutes for that semi-monastic, semi-military order; and with the greatest difficulty he withdrew from Milan, where such was his fame that the citizens insisted that he should become their archbishop. He presided at the Council of Sens, which condemned the doctrines of the illustrious but unfortunate Abelard; and so extraordinary were his power and influence that he was appointed by the Pope to preach the second Crusade, a duty which he performed with such success that he even induced the King of France himself, contrary to the advice of the best statesmen of the country, to go to the Holy Land as a Crusader. No single figure is as conspicuous in mediæval history as that of St. Bernard, if we except Charlemagne. But the great Emperor was the world-monarch, ruling by what was really, no matter how disguised, physical force. St. Bernard has also proved a world-monarch, whose empire did not cease with his death, for his weapons were spiritual. They were "poverty, chastity, and obedience;" and these, in the hands of those who know how to use them, history, if it tells us any lesson worth remembering, tells us are irresistible.

The monks have been called the right arm of the papacy; and it would seem that when any emergency arose in which it became necessary for the Church to employ a distinct agency for a particular purpose, the object was accomplished by the establishment of a new order of monks. This appears to me to have been the case when the orders of the Preachers or Dominicans

and of the Minorites or Franciscans were founded. Both of these orders were established about the same time (1215), and each to supply a need which was then specially felt. Preaching was not only not an essential but it was not an ordinary part of the Church service in the Middle Age. Christianity was sacerdotal; it commanded; it did not aim to persuade. It was the exclusive privilege of the bishops to preach; but the larger portion of them were feudal barons, whose education fitted them as little for this office as their inclination prompted them to assume it. The education of the faithful was by means of a splendid ritual. But by the beginning of the thirteenth century the vast crowds which flocked to the universities and frequented the lectures of even so heretical a teacher as Abelard, as well as the use of the vernacular or common language in the place of the Latin, made it very clear that it was the duty of the Church to instruct the faithful in doctrine as well as to arouse devotional feeling.

Just at this juncture St. Dominic, founder of the order of the Friar Preachers, appears. He was a Spaniard (born in 1170), and he first becomes conspicuous in Languedoc during the crusade against the Albigenses, preaching there with the utmost vehemence against the heresy of which they were accused. The order of Friar Preachers was authorized by the Pope in 1213, and shortly afterwards Dominican convents were established throughout Europe, and the voices of Dominican preachers penetrated into every land. Within a hundred

years after the death of St. Dominic the religious houses of his order numbered four hundred and seventy-two; and when we remember that to this order was specially given by the Pope the defence of the dogmas of the Church, and that the Inquisition was established and placed in charge of the Dominican friars for the enforcement of the observance of those dogmas, we can form some conception of the power and influence of these monks in carrying out a general scheme of Church policy.

St. Dominic had supplied one great need of the Church in the thirteenth century,—that of preaching and instruction; and it was reserved for another great saint, Francis of Assisi, about the same time, to reorganize the ministration of that Divine charity which is the most characteristic feature of practical Christianity, and which has in all ages been regarded by the Church as the very bond of peace and of all virtues. In the Middle Age, and especially in its later days, the revolt of the popular mind was against the wealth of the clergy, which, it was claimed, removed them from sympathy with the poor and suffering. The watchwords of that revolt which we hear among such heretics as the Cathari, the Waldenses, or poor men of Lyons, the Lollards, and the followers of Wyclif, were poverty and self-sacrifice. St. Francis made himself the echo of the popular complaint, and sought to bring about a reform within the Church by means of a monastic order which should carry the principle of the renunciation of riches and a love for

the poor to a point undreamed of by the sectaries around him. St. Francis had some peculiar advantages for the task which he undertook. He was emphatically, in our modern phrase, the right man in the right place at the right time. His followers compared him to our Lord; and it is easier to find fault with the sort of idolatrous devotion which they exhibited towards him, than to wonder that such was their attitude, for of all human beings who ever made the life of the Son of Man a model, St. Francis seems to have possessed in the highest degree that Divine charity preached by the life and the words of the Master.

It is easy to say that St. Francis must have been a little crazy, when he spoke of the sun as his brother, the moon and the stars as his sisters, and the earth as his mother, and when he called even upon the birds of the air to praise the Lord. Yet it is a curious fact that most of the great reformers in history have been accounted by the men of their time crazy, and perhaps even more curious that their very craziness seems to have given them their great force. The Pope himself, Innocent III., one of the most illustrious men who ever sat in the chair of St. Peter, was disposed to regard Francis as crazy when he asked for authority to establish an order in which the members were to be bound by vows which it would be, in his opinion, impossible to fulfil. To him one of the Cardinals made an answer which should be burned into the heart of every man who is in earnest in his desire to do good to his fellow-creatures. "To suppose,"

he said, "that anything is difficult or impossible with God is to blaspheme Christ and His gospel."

So the order of the Minor Brethren, or Gray Friars, was established. Their life was to differ from ordinary monastic life in this, that they were not to be secluded, as were the older orders, from the world. In this respect the rule of St. Dominic was the same. Those who entered the order of St. Francis were required to sell all their goods and distribute its price to the poor. They were forbidden to receive money or house or field; strangers and pilgrims in this world, they must live in poverty and humility. They must always be poor, for Christ made Himself poor for us. Even their houses and their churches should be small, mean in appearance, and without ornament. St. Francis himself was the living exemplar of all these precepts. In those days the fetid suburbs of the great towns had engendered a virulent form of that most loathsome disease, the Eastern leprosy. St. Francis was the first who did anything in a properly organized way for the relief of these miserable outcasts, and his life is full of instances of his heroic, nay, better, his Christian devotion to this repulsive duty. His followers were to visit the towns, two and two, in just so much clothing as the commonest beggar could procure. They were to sleep at night under arches or in the porches of deserted churches, among idiots, lepers, and outcasts, to beg their bread from door to door, and to set an example of piety and submission. Francis, as it has been well said, was the saint of the people, and of a

poetic people especially, like the Italians. His system was the democracy of Christianity, but as long as he lived it was a humble, meek, quiescent democracy. It was, too, a sort of pacific mysticism, which consoled the poor for the inequalities of this life by the hopes of heaven. It spread with the rapidity of a contagion through Europe. To the lower orders everywhere his teachings seemed almost a second gospel, and he himself like a second Redeemer.

It is not pleasant to remember that the grand conception of the Christian life embodied in the precepts and the example of St. Francis was not destined to have a permanent duration. The lofty ideal of his rule was not long maintained, and the mean appearance which had once been the distinguishing badge of the mendicant friar and his convent was exchanged for sumptuous churches and well-endowed religious houses. The spirit of the founder was gone, and the true source of the strength of his order—its poverty—went with it. But its history, even if all that is good in it be the holy life of St. Francis and the sympathy which his rule exhibits with the poor and the suffering, contains most suggestive lessons in regard to the real life of the Middle Age.

We turn now to consider another institution or practice outside of the formal organization of the Church and the State which colored very much the stream of tendency in the Middle Age. I refer to *chivalry*, which we may regard as representing the mediæval conception of the ideal life of a Christian knight. In some respects



chivalry may be considered as the finest and most consummate flower of that civilization which grew out of the influence of the Church upon the Teutonic warrior chief. We may say in the outset that the knight was not often in fact, what he is represented to be in the romances of the time, a man whose sole aim in life was the defence of the Church and the championship of unprotected women; but we must remember that such was his professed vocation, and such was the standard by which he claimed to be judged.

The mediæval knight was a peculiar and exceptional type, in a great measure the growth of the age, and one wholly unlike the warrior of any other period of history. He bears very little resemblance in his conduct and motives, for instance, to those heroes of antiquity of whose exploits we read in the *Iliad*. Achilles is one of those heroes, perhaps the greatest of them all. His answer to the prayer of Hector (whom he had mortally wounded) that he would deliver his dead body for burial to his father is not that of a hero, but of a savage. "Cease, wretched one," he says, "your begging. I wish I had the force and the courage to devour your quivering flesh as a return for the evils you have done me. No! if your father Priam should offer me as a ransom for your body its weight in gold, I would not give it up. The dogs and the vultures should devour it." Heroes who could talk in this way were not likely to be very civil to women. Hear the manner in which Jupiter upbraids Juno: "Remember the time when I

hung you up in the air with two anvils tied to your feet and your hands bound by a golden chain." Greek women, I suppose, must have been very attractive, or there would probably not have been a Trojan War; but it is rather discouraging to find that Helen, who was carried off from her home on account of her extraordinary beauty, does not seem to be certain whether she prefers Menelaus to Paris; and as to Andromache, I fear that constancy was not one of her virtues, notwithstanding the pathetic parting scene between Hector and herself.

The mediæval knight was cast in a different mould. He was a barbarian, not tamed by the Church so as to destroy his warlike instincts, but rather taught by the Church to employ that sentiment of personal independence and love of adventure which formed the very essence and force of his nature in its defence. He was taught to render valuable service chiefly in two ways,—in the defence of the Church proper when its orthodoxy needed, as it often did in those wild days, armed advocacy, and in shielding from cruelty and oppression certain classes of the suffering and feeble, especially women, whose protection had always been a particular object of the Church's solicitude. There seems to me to have been no greater instance of the Church's triumph in the Middle Age than this conversion of the weapons of barbarism into agencies for doing effectively its work. It is not difficult to explain the reasons for the progress of the Church in other directions, extraordinary as it

was. We can in a measure, at least, understand it by recalling its thorough organization and wise administration, by means of which history shows us that great results in other undertakings, both before and since, have been achieved. But when the problem was not merely how to subdue the rebellious elements in the Teutonic character by the force of the Church's teachings, but so to control and guide them as to make these rude warriors her most devoted champions, its successful solution seems little short of marvellous. How, then, were Teutonic warriors made Christian knights?

As I have before said, the Church was at first the *teacher* of the barbarians, not their ally, for it naturally hesitated to trust chiefs who were heathen when they were not Arians with that control over its organization which had always been exercised by the orthodox Roman Emperors. Not until the conversion of the Franks, or even later, the date of the coronation of Charlemagne, do we find the old Imperial relations of confidence between Church and State re-established in full vigor. When the alliance was renewed, it was so managed, strange to say, that the conquests of the Franks, nay, even the ferocity and ambition of their chiefs, were made to minister at least to the enlargement of the boundaries of the Church. Expeditions against the heathen by these warriors always had the sanction of the Church. A new way of serving God and mammon at the same time seems to have been discovered, and success in such enterprises gratified the lust of

conquest, as well as, in the opinion of the age, advanced God's kingdom. Wherever the Franks conquered, there was orthodoxy firmly planted ; and this, perhaps, is the explanation of the complacency with which the Church regarded such wholesale conversions as those of Charlemagne of the miserable captives on the banks of the Elbe, who saved their lives by abjuring the religion of their fathers, or of the followers of Clovis, who obeyed his order to be baptized as they would have done a command to attack the enemy.

Christianity and war thus came into a very strange, but a very active, alliance, such as we see illustrated afterwards on a large scale in the Crusades. To fight for the Church was in those days not merely the highest duty, but the noblest ambition also of those whose fathers had always regarded courage in battle as the sum of all virtue. It was very often, as may be supposed, their only way of showing their devotion to it. Gradually the effect of this strange combination was seen in the belief, which soon became universal, not merely that the worthiest end of life was to do the Church's bidding, but to do it in the only way possible for a layman, by the power of his sword. Hence lay service of a special kind was recognized as one of the agencies of the Church, and out of the recognition by the Church of such a service arose the institution of chivalry or knighthood. No one was born to such an honor in the earlier time, not even the king himself. It was open, like the priesthood, to all freemen. He upon whom it was conferred made

previously due proof of his fitness, and was then set apart for his work by a solemn consecration, pronouncing vows intended to be as binding as those taken by the priest at his ordination. His sword was blessed by the priest at the altar, in token that thenceforth it should be used only in defending the cause of God and of the weak and oppressed.

The Church, not always trusting to a sense of *duty* as a restraining power, appealed to another motive, which often controlled the knight when every other was powerless, and that was his pride in maintaining a position which was supposed to be befitting his rank and station. Out of this grew that sentiment of personal honor which was so characteristic a feature of chivalry. Men who could never be taught to do what was right because it was right, soon learned to do right because it was a becoming thing in them, as knights and nobles, to do so. *Noblesse oblige* was the motto of their order. This sentiment of honor was a deep-seated instinct with these children of the North, who are said to have felt a stain upon that honor like a wound. It continued to be the governing principle of the most noble among them long after the standard of what was honorable and the standard of what was true and right differed greatly. The general notions prevailing at a particular time in regard to the point of honor formed the practical guide for the conduct of the knights, affecting them very much as public opinion affects people's actions now.

Chivalry must not be regarded as maintaining, in any

proper sense, a moral code. We find even in typical knights the strange juxtaposition in the same person of brute force with the meekness and gentleness of the Christian ; the superb pride and arrogance of the barbarian with the punctilious observance of the most dignified and courtly forms of intercourse ; a spirit of rapacity, cruelty, and injustice, often restrained only by the fear lest giving way to it would be deemed unknightly ; a gross irregularity in the marriage relation, combined with a pretentious knight-errantry which strove to redress the wrongs of every oppressed woman except those of the knight's own wife. This is a strange jumble ; but it means that while knightly life was too often soiled by the common coarse life of the time, still it bore within it a seed which was imperishable, and which has become one of the most precious portions of that heritage which comes to us from the Middle Age. The modern gentleman in his best estate is the true successor of the mediæval knight, and his code of conduct, where it is not wholly based upon a sense of duty, rests upon a sentiment of personal honor, which teaches him to do some things and to avoid others because in so doing he does what he conceives to be worthy and becoming his position. The unwritten code of the gentleman is as binding upon him as the vows of the knight, and for the same reason, namely, because he scorns to do an unworthy act.

I have little time left to speak of the Crusades. With the main events of that history I must suppose my

readers sufficiently familiar, or at any rate the means of refreshing the memory are within reach should it be needful to do so. I wish now specially to draw attention to a certain aspect of the Crusades, or rather of the crusading spirit which brought about alike the wars against the Albigenses, the conflict with the Saracens in Spain, as well as the Crusades, commonly so called, in the Holy Land. It was all the direct outgrowth of the combination of monasticism with knighthood. In the organization of the Church in those days there was no machinery save that moved by the undying energy of the monks and of the knights which could have set on foot those vast expeditions which, for nearly two hundred years, embarked for the East. Some of the greatest Popes (Sylvester II. and Gregory VII. among others) preached with all their authority the holiness of the cause, urged upon every man the duty of assuming the cross, and promised the highest rewards of the future life to those who should fall fighting for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre; but nothing was done until Peter the Hermit and St. Bernard roused the passions of the European chivalry against the Infidel. The Crusades, as is well known, after the first ardor had cooled, were made by their leaders a pretext for a policy in the East which was wholly condemned by the Church as foreign to the original design, and in the pursuit of which the great central idea which gave them birth was either forgotten or ignored. But in the beginning those who went were in terrible earnest; they were in earnest not merely

because monks and knights had roused their zeal when Popes and bishops had failed, but because these monks and knights only asked them to follow where they themselves led. The first Crusaders may have been very ignorant and very fanatical, but these very qualities led them to do some very grand as well as some very foolish things. Take this illustration for instance in regard to the point of honor. When the army reached Antioch, the Moslems, evidently puzzled to understand why this immense array should come from the ends of the earth to secure the free admission of pilgrims to a sepulchre, offered to permit the army to enter Jerusalem if they would do so without their arms. This offer was repelled with scorn by the knightly leaders of the Crusaders, who felt that the object of the expedition had not been gained unless the Holy City was conquerèd by the sacrifice of their own blood. Again, what a picture do we see of the religion of the time, and of the strange combination of pride and humility which marked the ideal knight, when we find Godfrey de Bouillon refusing to become King of Jerusalem! "No, no," said that highest type of chivalry; "let me be only the defender of the Holy Sepulchre: think not that I can ever wear a golden crown here where the King of kings, Jesus Christ the Son of God, wore a crown of thorns on that day when He died for the sins of the world."

As in the East, so in the West the crusading spirit was kept alive and made aggressive by the monks and the knights. An illustration of this may be found in the



crusade against the Albigenses, which has been called by an eminent historian the conquest of municipal or republican France, or that portion of the country south of the river Loire, by feudal or knightly France, or that portion, speaking roughly, to the north of that river. The first had all the culture, refinement, and Roman civilization of the time, but with it loose habits of living and opinions regarded as heretical. Pope Innocent III., once himself a monk, determined to extirpate this heresy by exterminating the inhabitants and filling their places with good Catholics. He called upon Count Raymond of Toulouse, the sovereign of the country, to destroy his own subjects who were alleged to be heretics, and upon his neglect or refusal to do so he directed that a crusade should be preached against them. His principal agents in this work were the Dominican friars, led by St. Dominic and the monks of Citeaux. In answer to their frantic appeals for aid in maintaining the orthodoxy of the Church, and with the promise of extravagant rewards both of an earthly and a heavenly nature, the petty chieftains of Northern and Western France with their retainers rushed down upon unhappy Languedoc and Provence in overwhelming numbers. There, under the command of Simon de Montfort, the lord of an unimportant fief in the neighborhood of Paris, they waged for many years one of the cruellest wars in history, strangely called a "holy war." By this war the country was wellnigh ruined, the inhabitants killed or driven out of it, and its ancient government completely

overthrown. Still, the orthodox faith was re-established, the zeal of the monks triumphed; but the knights who had been the right arm of the Church in this conflict, and who had hoped when they engaged in the crusade to divide that fair land among themselves, founding therein a large number of petty sovereignties, were (it is satisfactory to know) cheated at least of their earthly reward, the province at the close of the war being annexed to the crown of France.

The history of Spain in the Middle Age is the history of a crusade of eight hundred years' duration. From the battle of Xeres, in 712, to the final expulsion of the Saracens from Granada, in 1492, there was in that country a perpetual conflict between the Cross and the Crescent. The Visigothic Christians, driven by the victorious Saracens to the mountains of Galicia, kept there the purity of the faith, and never permitted their purpose of revenge to falter. They needed no monks to stimulate their ardor; and Spain presents a curious instance in history of a country made Catholic *par excellence* by the crusading spirit of Christian knights alone. To them the idea of country and of religion was one and inseparable, and as they slowly advanced, in the course of ages winning one district after another by their swords from the hated Moslems, they left ineffaceable marks of their blind zeal for the faith at every step,—marks so ineffaceable that they are easily recognized at this day in the condition and policy of that country. The brilliant culture of the Saracens found no favor in

the eyes of these Crusaders, for it was all tainted with heresy, and to them heresy was an accursed thing. The great works of public utility which had marked the Saracenic occupation of Spain,—a system of irrigation, for instance, the fruit of their knowledge of hydraulic science, by which the plains of Granada and Andalusia were made the most fertile districts of Europe, gardens which they planted, rivalling in beauty those of far-famed Damascus, universities which they founded, whose reputation was so wide-spread that they numbered among their pupils a monk who afterwards became Pope as Sylvester II., grand libraries, the treasure-houses of the wisdom of the past, at that time far exceeding in the number of the books they contained those of any country in Europe, mosques and palaces whose architecture even now excites the wonder of the world,—all these things were not only valueless, they were hateful, to the Spanish Crusaders, and they were destroyed because they had the mark of the beast upon them.

There can be no doubt whatever that in the Middle Age the Saracens in Spain were vastly superior to the inhabitants of any other country in Europe in their knowledge of science and its applications to the useful arts. Yet so inseparably was hatred of their religion associated in the minds of their conquerors with everything that was characteristic of the Saracens, that Spain was the last country of the West to learn those useful arts of which the disciples of the Prophet had been the pioneers on her own soil. By a natural process, the

blind zeal against the Saracens was easily transformed to a profound contempt for the occupations in which they engaged, and especially for the labor which produced such wonderful results. Hence the step was easy to a contempt for all mechanical labor; and hence we observe in the history of Spain, from the time the country was occupied by the Saracens down to the present hour, that nowhere else in Europe has the line between those who work and those who do not, between the lords of the country and the inhabitants of the town, between the *hidalgo* and the *pechero*, between the soldier and the citizen, been so strongly and deeply marked. We shall find, as we go on in our historical investigations, that labor was in many ways the great civilizer of modern Europe. As it did its work, it had everywhere to overcome the knightly contempt for what was supposed to be its servile character; but in Spain, formidable as was this obstacle, it became wellnigh insurmountable, because it was intrenched in the strongest religious prejudice.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY, THE SCHOOLMEN, AND THE UNIVERSITIES.

ONE method of testing what the true life of a nation is, would be to ascertain its theory and practice in regard to the education of the young. If we can discover what the best minds of a nation at any particular age of its history most thoroughly believe,—in other words, what is taught, and how they teach it,—we have gained some knowledge of the principle of life in that nation and what it holds most dear in that life. Education is, of course, a broad term, and in its widest sense it includes every influence which affects, by precept or example, the actions of human beings. In this sense the education of the Middle Age, of which its peculiar life was the outcome, was moulded largely by forces of which I have spoken in preceding chapters, such as the power of the Church, the remains of Roman civilization, feudalism, monasticism, chivalry, and the like. The question now is, what did the life thus formed teach its own age and those which succeeded it, and what methods did it employ? The impression which many receive is that this era in history ought to serve only as a warning against fundamental errors; that necessarily its life was a life of force, one solely of conflict, strife, and confusion.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why it was formerly the practice, and perhaps in some quarters still is, to speak of the Middle Age as the "*Dark Ages*," meaning thereby that they form an era in the world's history in which in all the relations of life the governing power was pre-eminently one in which reason and justice and truth had no sway.

When, however, we come to explore more carefully its inner recesses, we find, in strange juxtaposition with the reign of force which is so conspicuous a feature of the time, a very rich, abundant, and altogether peculiar intellectual life, which exhibited its power in the efforts of master-minds to uphold the theories of the Middle Age in Church and State. There was, too, a thoroughly organized and universally adopted system of scholastic education designed to train the young to defend these theories on grounds of reason and of right, and they were supposed to be by this method as well prepared for the performance of the special duties of the life which they were to lead as our young men are educated for their future work. It is this mediæval technical education of the young, so different from ours, that we propose to examine in this chapter, as throwing light on the life of the age. That system was one which we may now regard as characterized by fundamental errors: still, it is interesting in itself to study the scheme and methods of instruction in Europe for nearly a thousand years, and, besides, it is, like feudalism, a very curious illustration of the life of the time. Like feudalism, too, it contains,

notwithstanding its many strange features, the germs of much that has been transplanted into our own modern systems. We shall probably find in it, too, another illustration of the unbroken continuity of history, a continuity which is its very essence, but which sometimes escapes our notice as it is hidden from our view for a time beneath the surface of passing events. We should hardly expect at first to find any of the missing links which go to make up the chain in the general practice and habit of scholastic education during that portion of the world's history, when its most conspicuous features were the tumult and strife characteristic of the Middle Age. But we shall discover, if I mistake not, that the mediæval systems of education have left marks in history as ineffaceable as mediæval theories of government in Church and State.

In the declining Roman Empire, among the many agencies of civilization which the Church appropriated was the Imperial organization of education. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, schools, liberally endowed by such Emperors as Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Vespasian, and Theodosius, existed in all the large cities of the Empire, East and West. In these schools the young were taught to read correctly, and afterwards the plots of plays and poems were explained to them, and some outline of history given. Much time was then occupied in translating passages from Greek into Latin and then back again into Greek. The whole system was founded upon a study of language, upon what

we should call now grammar and rhetoric ; and this was a sensible basis for the object sought after, which was chiefly to make the young man who was trained in these schools a forensic orator. The Church, fully alive to the necessity of educating not merely her clergy but the youth of the better class of the laity also, was at times sorely puzzled to determine whether they should be trained in schools where the text-books were filled with the praises of the heathen gods and with the horrors of the heathen mythology. Unable at that time to establish schools of her own, the Church permitted her children to attend the heathen schools, not as a matter of choice, but of necessity. Some of the greatest of the early Fathers of the Church, Augustine and Jerome for instance, had been in their youth eminent scholars after the Roman pattern ; but with a keen recollection of the pleasures of their early studies they retained such a conviction of the pernicious influence on Christian morals of the works of the more celebrated writers of antiquity, that all their influence was used to discountenance as far as possible their study.

With the invasion of the Franks the Imperial schools in the West were closed, and a considerable period elapsed in which apparently no systematic instruction was given anywhere to the young. The revival of education, as of many other of the agencies of civilization in that truly darkest of all dark days,—the eighth century,—was due to the Church. By its authority schools attached to each cathedral and each monastery were established.



From these schools all study of Pagan authors was necessarily excluded. The system, the method, the form in which the instruction was given, did not differ much from that which had been used in the Imperial schools. The boys were taught to read, but it was that they might study the Bible and understand the services; to write, in order that they might multiply copies of the sacred books and of the psalter; to understand music, so that they might sing with due effect the Ambrosian chant. They studied arithmetic; but it was chiefly that they might know how to calculate the return of Easter.

Both the schools attached to the monasteries and those of the cathedrals were thus thoroughly ecclesiastical in their tone and spirit, and the principal object was to qualify the pupils, as I have said, for the performance of the services of the Church. The traditions of learning, so far as it had to do with Pagan antiquity, were wholly lost, buried in the invasion that overwhelmed all that was distinctive in Roman civilization. For nearly two centuries we hear of the studies of the monks of St. Benedict in Italy and the attempt by St. Boniface to transplant into Germany the Benedictine rule with its obligations to study by the monks, of the learning of the Irish monks, and—especially of St. Columba at Iona; but it is evident that what was taught in the monastic schools was very narrow and meagre in its character, and the reverse of liberalizing in the modern sense in its spirit.

Out of one of these schools, however, came a man who was to open a new era in education in Western Europe, and that was Alcuin, the head of the cathedral school of York. This school, strange to say, was situated near the outer limit of civilization, in a country more utterly and purely Teutonic,—that is to say, more barbarous and less Roman,—at that time, than any other portion of Western Europe. And yet the school itself was full of the traditions and methods of St. Benedict, and of Pope Gregory the Great, his disciple and admirer. Although in so remote a corner of the world, the explanation of the cause of the great eminence of this school is not difficult. The secret is to be found in the character of the library attached to the school. This library contained not only the dogmatic works of the Fathers of the Church, but portions, at least, of the writings of Virgil, of Lucan, of Pliny, of Cicero, and of various other classical authors.

Charlemagne, who aspired to be not merely the conqueror of the world, but its civilizer also, met Alcuin in Parma towards the close of the eighth century; and, with that sure judgment of human character which is one of the gifts of truly great men, he invited the scholar to reside at his court at Aix-la-Chapelle, and to establish in the palace itself a school, in which those who were looking forward to holding high positions in the Church and State under him should become pupils. The establishment of this school forms an era in the history of education; for although one of its objects,

like that of the cathedral and monastic schools, was to confirm those who were there instructed in the orthodox faith, yet the position of the scholars, many of whom seem to have been of the laity, and the method of teaching adopted, differed from those found elsewhere. In his zeal for learning, Charlemagne himself became a pupil; and his example was followed by his three sons, by his wife, by his sister,—in short, by all the members of the royal family,—and by other distinguished personages at his court. Alcuin taught at this school of the palace Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectics or Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy,—that is to say, three arts and four sciences, as they were then classified,—the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, as this method of instruction was afterwards called in the mediæval universities. It may be admitted that this seems a strange division of the subjects of human knowledge and inquiry; and yet it embraced a good deal more than would now be taught under such heads, and all that was at that time supposed to have anything to do with the development of a man as a Christian and a good subject of the Emperor.

Alcuin's ignorance of some of the elementary notions of grammar, rhetoric, and particularly of astronomy, is very conspicuous: still, with all his blunders, he possessed that which is perhaps the most valuable gift of the teacher, the power of awakening in the minds of his pupils interest in the subjects taught. Charlemagne's zeal, at least, was so stimulated by the knowledge he gained, poor and starving as it seems to us, that he issued an

edict or capitulary in 787 which has been called the great charter of modern European education. In this he tells the bishops that the study of letters, both for their own instruction and for the purpose of teaching others, should be regularly kept up among the clergy, and that such learning is absolutely essential if they desire to understand the mysteries of the faith and the true meaning of the figurative and allegorical language of the Scriptures. This edict was followed by two others before the close of the century. In the first the Emperor directs that candidates for orders shall not be taken solely, as formerly, from the servile class, but from the sons of freemen, and in the other, after arguing that study is a means whereby the life of the righteous is nourished and ennobled and the man himself fortified against temptation, he directs that hereafter, in all the schools, provision shall be made for the gratuitous instruction of the children of the laity. We think of Charlemagne as the monarch and conqueror of the world. Perhaps we do not as often recall the imperishable and fundamental ideas upon which he really built, not merely the idea of a universal monarchy after the pattern of Imperial Rome, but also an idea which was to be the most fruitful of all that rule us in modern times,—that of universal and gratuitous education.

But Charlemagne seems, like many others before and since, to have outgrown his teacher, even when that teacher was so eminent a man as Alcuin. Among other subjects in which the keen inquiring mind of the

Emperor had a special interest was astronomy. The planet Mars having disappeared from the heavens for nearly a whole year, Charlemagne naturally asked his teacher what could be the meaning of this phenomenon. He was told that the sun had detained the planet in its course, but had at last released it through the fear of the Nemæan lion, the star having become visible again first in the constellation of Leo.

Even in those days this theory of the movement of the heavenly bodies must have been, to say the least, very unsatisfactory to a man like Charlemagne. At all events, we find him soon after transferring Alcuin from the palace school to the post of abbot of the monastery of St. Martin at Tours, at that time the most richly endowed religious house in Europe. His place at the head of the palace school was supplied by an Irish monk named Clement. The monasteries in Ireland, as has been said, were the refuges of learned men during the whole period when the invasions of the barbarians had swept nearly every vestige of the old civilization from the Continent. A form of Christianity grew up in that island, and was propagated by its monks in Scotland and the northern part of England, which was peculiar at least in this, that it was wholly independent of the authority of the Roman See. These Irish monks studied astronomy in a rational way in order to determine the correct time for observing Easter, a subject in those days deemed of great importance, and the Irish Church differed from the Roman in regard to the true date

of that festival. The Irish monks also studied certain of the Greek philosophers, not merely from a love of learning, but also that they might thereby train themselves in those dialectical methods of reasoning of which Plato and Zeno, and, above all, Aristotle, had been the chief teachers. The clergy of the Roman obedience were not then permitted, as I have stated, to study for any purpose the profane authors, and this not merely because true orthodoxy should be founded on faith and not on reason, but because it was said that such was the antagonism between Paganism and Christianity that it was unbecoming that the praises of Jove and of Christ should be spoken even in the same language.

Charlemagne, as I have had occasion often to say, was a man far above his age in general ideas, and was not to be governed in his grand scheme of education by petty and narrow speculations such as these. Having found an Irish monk who really knew something about astronomy and was familiar with Greek authors, he hesitated not, to the great disgust of the orthodox clergy of his Empire, with Alcuin at its head, to install Clement at once as the chief of the palace school. He builded better than he knew, for by this act he was unconsciously shaping the course and direction of the higher mediæval education, and beginning a controversy in which for ages great men fought on both sides, one party under the banner of free inquiry and of reason, and the other under that of faith and the authority of the Church. We know little of the instructions of Clement of Ireland,

but it is clear from what followed that the Irish school of philosophy, which afforded training so unlike that given on the Continent, maintained its footing at the court of the Carlovingian Emperors during the larger portion of the ninth century. This novel system of philosophy and dialectics was taught by a succession of Irish monks, the chief of whom was the famous John Scotus Erigena, who became attached to the court in the time of Charles the Bald, the grandson of Charlemagne. Of his special influence I shall speak hereafter; but the point now requiring our attention is this, that the period during which the narrow, technical, and almost formal system of instruction adopted by Alcuin had sufficed for all wants had passed, and that a philosophy upon a broader basis and with higher aims kindled the zeal of scholars. From the palace school at Aix-la-Chapelle, after its reorganization, went out pupils who soon became masters, and who, moving from place to place after the manner of that age, and propagating their doctrines, spread the love of the new philosophy and gained proselytes everywhere. Shortly after, the Church schools themselves, becoming tired of teaching only grammar and arithmetic, were desirous of introducing the study of philosophical methods; renowned philosophers often became the heads of these schools, and taught with such brilliancy their favorite theories that, although many of them became chief dignitaries of the Church, their fame with their contemporaries as well as with posterity rests upon their having been great teachers, and not upon

their having held exalted positions in the hierarchy of the Church or the State.

The philosophy which these men taught is known in history as the Scholastic philosophy, and they as its teachers are called Schoolmen. For six hundred years this system and method of philosophizing was taught in the schools and universities of Western Europe, and was regarded as the means of solving the darkest and most intricate problems of human life. It has been the fashion of modern times to decry this system as a meaningless one, and as utterly unfitted for the purpose to which it was applied. The terms "scholastic" and "schoolmen" have been made terms of opprobrium; the philosophers of the Middle Age have been regarded as blind leaders of the blind, and their method of solving the great problems of the universe simply as a sort of technical jargon without any reality or practical outcome, and amounting to hardly more than a mere play on words. The schoolmen who were the teachers of the Middle Age had, it is said, more to do with making that age dark than either the Churchmen or the knights.

The controversies of the schoolmen and their methods have, it is true, been long since forgotten; and yet it ill becomes us as students of history to disdain the investigation of a system which for so many ages provided the intellectual food of Europe. And the very first thing which strikes us as we consider it is that, like feudalism, it was a universal system, and one which remained in full force until the conditions of life in Europe were wholly



changed, and hence that there must have been something in it which made it suited to the circumstances of the time in which it was supported by this general opinion. I shall endeavor to give some account of this mysterious subject, well aware of the difficulties in the way of satisfactorily explaining it. In the first place, then, it is to be regarded simply as a method, or agency, or instrument,—an *organon*, as the word is used by Aristotle and Bacon,—of teaching the truth. It was not in itself, at least at first, a science, but a method agreed upon by those who held differing views on abstract subjects, by which the correctness of those views might be ascertained, and a standard established by which their differences could be measured. The usual explanation of scholasticism is that its object was to reconcile revelation with reason, to establish the truth of the Christian mysteries by the syllogistic form of reasoning adopted from Aristotle. Of course it is true that all schoolmen were ecclesiastics, and that there were certain dogmas of the Church concerning the being and nature of God, the Trinity, predestination, free will, and the like, which were often explained and defended by them in the syllogistic form; but the priest and the philosopher were never merged in each other. The sacraments and other Christian mysteries remained always in the province of theology, while philosophy was permitted and encouraged by the Church to investigate the vast field outside. In all times and under all systems of religion both theologians and philosophers have agreed that the

nature of the Deity may be a proper object of scientific study.

How, then, did this system grow up, and how did it become the universal solvent of all the great problems which disturbed the human mind in the Middle Age? The first step was taken in the schools formed after the pattern of Charlemagne's palace school. Dialectics or logic, it will be remembered, was one of the subjects taught in the *trivium*, or the elementary department of instruction in the schools. It was there used for the purpose of explaining the meaning of words,—not merely their definition, which was more properly the province of grammar and rhetoric, but the relations of words to each other, and even their hidden meanings. The result that followed from this practice is a striking illustration of the truth of the statement that “words are things.” Take for instance the word “Will.” How much must one know if he comprehends fully the meaning of that little word!—about free-will, for instance, its relations with foreknowledge, the limitations of its power, its responsibility, etc. And so with all words which represent abstract ideas: to know them thoroughly is to know clearly the things they represent. But, more than this, they sought to know the true logical relations of words with other words; and hence a rudimentary idea of science grew up which is nothing more than such a classification of our knowledge that we may understand the true relation of cause and effect. Hence logic, which sought to establish a true co-ordination of our ideas by giving us

an accurate knowledge of the meaning and relations of the words used in expressing them, soon became not merely the master-science but the only science, because it had drawn all the others to itself. It was the key which unlocked them all. At best the others, such as grammar, arithmetic, geometry, taught men facts; logic was the true bond which united them all together and showed the relations of each to the other.

It was in the endeavor, first, to explain the meaning of all abstract terms and their relations, and, secondly, to defend the conclusions so reached by the syllogistic process, that the scholastic philosophy was led into those refined and subtle distinctions of the meaning of words or terms and their relations which make it so difficult for us moderns to comprehend them, and which have led many to think that the conclusions the schoolmen reached with such painstaking ingenuity and learning were, after all, of no practical value. The difficulty was, as we can see clearly now, in attributing an exaggerated or false value to the dialectical method as an instrument for reaching truth. The practice was to place all questions, great and small, in those days, in the crucible of logic to test their meaning, and to ascertain whether their elements could be formed into a proper syllogism. If the process seems at first only a method of constructing ingenious puzzles, we are to remember that the greatest problems of human life were solved, as well as a knowledge of the mysteries of the Divine government reached, to the satisfaction of some of the

acutest intellects the world has ever known, by this method of accurately defining the terms in which, by the rules of logic, they were supposed to be properly expressed, and then deducing the relations between them growing out of terms so defined.

In pursuing this method of ascertaining the meaning of words or terms and their relations, the schoolmen soon discovered that words were things; and shortly afterwards arose the celebrated controversy about "*universals*," which was the technical name given to certain words expressing general ideas. The question was whether the word which denoted a general idea or a "universal" presented a real object to the mind, a true subsisting entity outside the mere abstract conception of it by the intellect. For instance, what does the word "humanity" in its logical sense mean? Is it a thing really and objectively existing, or is it a mere word to mark our general conception of the human race? Those who believed that universals or general ideas were objective realities were called *Realists*, while those who denied the real existence of universals, and who asserted that nothing actually is but the individual, that of which the senses take cognizance, were called *Nominalists*. The quarrel between these parties lasted until the time of the Renaissance, when the fame of Plato, who was the first Realist, superseded that of Aristotle, the great master of the Nominalist schoolmen. Into the merits of the controversy I cannot pretend to enter. It is very clear, however, that it was regarded by the parties as something

much more serious than a quarrel about mere words. The Church watched its progress with the greatest jealousy, fearing the rationalism of such men as Erigena, Roscelin, and Abelard. The gravest questions of theology, as well as those which seem to us most fanciful and trivial, became involved in the debate. The schoolmen, with their peculiar logic, did not hesitate even to explore the nature of the Trinity. Such was the acrimony of the rival parties in this logical conflict that the theology of the time seems to have fallen into the hands of contentious disputants, and its dogmas became an occasion of strife instead of objects of faith.

Aristotle ruled paramount in these controversies, and under his supposed authority the schoolmen tested the strength of their philosophy by its power to explain the true character of *universals*,—in other words, to solve that question which in one form or another is to be found at the basis of all metaphysical speculation, ancient and modern,—viz., whether our conceptions of things are merely the result of combinations in our own minds, or whether they inhere in the nature of the objects presented to our senses. To work out the refined and subtile distinctions involved in the logical method was not only the constant and most cherished occupation for ages of the best-trained intellects, but, what perhaps was even more remarkable, the young men who flocked, literally by tens of thousands, to the universities, not merely of Paris and of Oxford, but everywhere throughout Europe where learning was

taught, came to listen to lectures and to hear disputations upon these abstruse subjects by men whose fame was great because they were great schoolmen. The enthusiasm of the young men of that time for this scholastic philosophy it is not easy to explain; and I am sure it would be difficult to imitate it now, even had we Scotus Erigena, Roscelin, and Abelard on the one side denying the reality of "universals," and Anselm and St. Bernard on the other affirming it.

This enthusiasm, and the multitudes who were moved by it, became the immediate cause of the founding of modern universities. Of these, the University of Paris and that of Bologna were the oldest. The first became for many centuries so celebrated as a school of theology that it was known as the first school of the Church in Europe, while that at Bologna was equally distinguished as a place for the study of the Roman law. Towards the close of the twelfth century the University of Paris was fully organized by the establishment of the four faculties of arts or philosophy, theology, the canon law, and medicine. The king, Philip Augustus, in the year 1200 (and his example was followed by his successors), granted the university exemption from the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals and from taxation, while the Pope, Nicholas IV., gave full authority to its professors to teach and manage schools throughout Christendom and to assume the title of doctors. The number of the students is said to have been at one time equal to that of the citizens, and to have reached during

the fifteenth century thirty thousand. This vast number of students made it necessary that for the purposes of instruction and discipline there should be a system of organization, and that adopted was the division of the students and professors into *nations*, in which their position depended upon the country from which they came, and not upon the faculty whose instructions they attended. Each nation formed a distinct body, composed of the professors and students from a particular district, and the procurator or head of the nation was elected by this body. All the *nations* united in the election of the head or rector of the university, thus establishing that fundamental principle in university government that its president should be chosen by those who have the best opportunity of knowing the qualifications of the person proposed, and his fitness for performing the duties devolving upon him. I call this principle a fundamental one, for it prevails to this day throughout Europe, and it is worthy of remark that it is so reasonable in itself, and has been so approved by universal experience, that it remains the only method of governing human beings which has been unchanged by all the changes of the last seven hundred years.

The system was, as may be inferred, one of training and mental discipline rather than one designed to impart a knowledge of facts. The instruction given in the faculty of arts, and later in that of theology,—the principal faculties, as I have said, of the University of Paris,—comprised those subjects contained in what were technically

called the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, the first or elementary course embracing grammar, logic, and rhetoric, the second or advance course music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The number seven had a mystical significance in the Middle Age. There were seven cardinal virtues, seven deadly sins, seven sacraments, etc.; and perhaps for this reason there were said to be seven fundamental branches of human knowledge.

But probably nothing was very thoroughly taught, according to our modern notions, save the scholastic philosophy, especially in its application to theology. The method of teaching did not differ at the University of Paris from that which had been employed by celebrated private teachers previous to its establishment. It is not easy to account for the vast multitude of students who crowded around celebrated schoolmen who expounded their system, whether in the university, or, as in the case of Abelard, in a secluded place in the country, whither he had retired, hoping—as it proved, in vain—that his lectures would be less crowded by enthusiastic pupils. It is certainly a strange spectacle of the life of the Middle Age to find its intense intellectual life consumed by a violent quarrel about the reality of “*universals*,” and to find the educated men of the time, not only at Paris but at the centres of instruction everywhere throughout Europe, disputing with each other, as Realists and Nominalists, with as much mutual bitterness and hate as those who were fighting in another sphere under the party names of Guelph and Ghibeline.



In the absence of printed books the instruction given by these teachers was necessarily oral. The students in these universities had little other aid than their notebooks to enable them to prepare for their examination for the degree of Master of Arts, the principal value of which consisted in the license to teach which accompanied it. The University of Paris was a power of the first magnitude throughout Europe during the Middle Age. In France it was the counsellor of her kings in their many disputes with the Popes, and its arbitrament was sought and its decision regarded as final in all questions of conflict between the Church and the State. Philippe le Bel consulted it on the question of jurisdiction between himself and the Pope; and Charles V., with a just estimate of the glory which this renowned establishment had brought to his throne, gave it the title of *fille aînée des rois de France*, and rank and precedence in the kingdom immediately after the princes of the blood. The university was regarded as the stronghold of orthodoxy; but it did not hesitate to speak in the tone of authority to Benedict XIII. when he was elected Pope, urging upon him the necessity of reform in the Church. In the Council of Constance, in the fifteenth century, where a most honest effort was made to bring about a reform of the Church by means within itself, the leading spirit was Gerson, who was the president of the Council, being at the same time delegate of the University of Paris and ambassador of the King of France. When we hear the Middle Age spoken of as the Dark Ages, as

the period of arbitrary and unchecked force, never let us forget that at no epoch in the world's history, ancient or modern, did scholars more worthily fill their true position as the guides of the world, and never has their authority been more generally recognized or more readily obeyed in all that concerns the highest interests of mankind, than in these self-same Dark Ages, as they are called.

While philosophy and theology were thus occupying the attention of the acutest intellects of Europe at Paris and at the other universities in France and in England, another subject, a knowledge of which was to have a profound influence upon the destinies of Europe, was being taught at Bologna in Italy, and that was the Roman civil law. The foundation of the celebrated university at that place is said to have been coeval with that at Paris. The general organization in both institutions was the same, but (as it often happened), while Paris became the headquarters of the schoolmen, Bologna was the resort of students of the civil law, or civilians as they were called. The revival of this study is only another of the countless proofs we meet with of the permanent influence of the Roman civilization. As the Roman law, known to the students of the Middle Age only as embodied in the Pandects and in the Code of Justinian, was supposed to be the instrument which had been actually used for governing the world by a system of Imperial despotism, the German Emperors when they sought to make themselves in their heterogeneous

dominions successors to the Imperial Cæsars desired to avail themselves of the same method of administration to produce the same results. At the same time and at the same place grew up a disposition to study the new science called the Canon law, which was a system of Church law founded upon the decrees of Councils and of Popes, and forming the basis for its orderly administration. To Bologna, as to Paris, students flocked in crowds. In the middle of the fourteenth century the number was over thirteen thousand. Whether they all became civil or canon lawyers I am unable to tell. The vast attendance of students in the different departments of these universities presents, too, a problem in mediæval life which I have never been able satisfactorily to solve. How they all managed to spend the five or six years in residence which were required before they presented themselves for examination for a degree, what was the nature of that examination, whence the students came, and where they went after being graduated, are all questions which are difficult to answer.

We are impressed, upon a survey of mediæval education, with the absence in it of any instruction in either natural or applied science. We measure in these days our civilization so entirely by our knowledge of the forces of nature and our control over them for our own purposes, that we are naturally inclined to think that scholars must have been really very ignorant in those ages. But we must remember that the leaders of the age are to be measured by a different standard, when

the object of education was mental training, and not the acquisition of knowledge. It is most true that revelation and authority were the bases of all speculations in the Middle Age, as scepticism and individualism are those of inquiries which have proved so fruitful in results in modern times. The question now is not which is the best or the truest system (and no one system of education can be the best for all times), but why such a one as I have described was necessarily the outcome of the peculiar circumstances of the life of the Middle Age.

There is a link which binds the education of that age to that which has become the popular form in our own day, just as there are links which connect such institutions as feudalism and the mediæval Church with our modern civilization. If education now means chiefly the acquisition of a knowledge of facts, we may find in the gradual introduction of the Arabian philosophy and Arabian science, especially in the methods of studying the science of medicine in the mediæval universities, illustrations that our own methods are not wholly original. I speak of Arabian science ; but it should be more properly called Greek science as studied and applied by Arabian philosophers. In the early days of Moham-medanism in Syria, all the works of Aristotle (not merely his *Logic*), as well as the treatises on medicine of Hippocrates and Galen, and of the Alexandrian astronomers, were accessible to the learned men among the Arabian conquerors, and were made the subject of

profound study. A rational system of medicine and astronomy derived from the Greeks came thus to the knowledge of the Saracens, and was carried by them wherever the conquering arms of the Prophet led them. In this way the extraordinary development of the material civilization of the Arabs in Spain during their ascendancy there is accounted for. It was impossible to hide the light of science such as the Arabs taught in Spain, and it soon began to shine in the dark places of Christian Europe. As in Syria of old, so in France and in other parts of Christendom philosophy stole in under the protection of medicine. "It was," says a great writer, "as physicians that the famous Arabian philosophers, as well as some Jews, acquired great fame and authority. There is not among them a philosopher who had not some connection with medicine, nor a physician who had not some connection with philosophy. The translators of the most famous philosophers, Averroës and Avicenna, were physicians. Metaphysics only followed in the train of physical science." The faculty of medicine in the universities, which had hitherto been somewhat neglected in Western Europe, became under the teaching of the Arabian doctrines one of the most important of the departments of instruction, and that at Montpellier and the school at Salerno were as crowded with medical students as the University of Paris with schoolmen, or that of Bologna with civilians or canonists. The old scholastic philosophy could not escape the contagion of the methods of physical investigation used in the study of medicine.

Gradually the influence of these methods made itself felt in the universities, and, when it became apparent, the alarm of the orthodox and of the Church authorities led them in vain so to order the teaching of the professors that the very timid doubts which had been expressed in some quarters concerning the claims of the Church should be forever silenced. An attempt was made of the most strenuous kind to place the whole instruction in the University of Paris in the hands of the Dominicans and Franciscans, hoping thereby that this old stronghold of orthodoxy should be preserved to the Church. This attempt failed; but these orders excluded from the universities were not idle as champions of the faith. They produced the five great modern schoolmen whose special work it was to do what it has been often erroneously said was the duty of all,—viz., to reconcile revelation and the authority of the Church with human reason by Aristotelian methods more fully understood.

Scholasticism at the last, however, from the prodigious mental activity which it kept up, became a tacit universal insurrection against authority: it was the swelling of the ocean before the storm. It began to assign bounds to that which had been the universal all-embracing domain of theology. It was a sign of a great awakening of the human mind when theologians thought it both their duty and their privilege to philosophize. There was a vast waste of intellectual labor, but still it was intellectual labor, and, as we shall see, it was not, in the end, unfruitful.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE LABORING CLASSES IN THE MIDDLE AGE.

THERE is perhaps no more striking contrast between modern life and the life of antiquity and of the Middle Age than that presented by the different social position and influence of those engaged in trade, and especially in the industrial and mechanic arts, in the two epochs. At the present day, and especially in this country, the successful man of business is king, ruling our society in nearly all its departments with an authority as unchallenged, and often as arbitrary, as that of the most despotic sovereign who ever sat on a throne. With the natural disposition of mankind to worship success, those who become rich in this way are looked upon as objects of imitation and envy. Not only so, but the methods which they have adopted in becoming rich are considered appropriate for the attainment of very different ends in life from mere money-getting. Self-made men, as they are called,—that is, men without any liberal training, who have thus become rich by their own exertions,—are not only the arbiters of trade and leaders in social influence, but they are too often the guides in the special development of religion, of politics, of education, and of benevolence, and, in short, determine not merely

the ideal to which society should aspire, but the methods by which it should be reached.

It may not at once occur to many that this extraordinary all-pervading power of wealth, and the social consideration which it gives, are among the most modern developments of modern times. There were, of course, rich men who were self-made both in antiquity and in the Middle Age; but men grown rich by trade do not seem to have been held in honor in either epoch. Their want of social consideration and influence is abundantly clear from the works of the great writers of the time. Cicero, for instance, in writing to his son, tells him that those who gained their livelihood by mercantile pursuits, as well as those who followed the mechanic arts, were incapable of any noble sentiment; while Seneca, who was one of the two sages of antiquity who, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, needed only baptism to procure them admission to the Christian's heaven, speaks of the useful arts of life as the fitting occupation only of slaves. Such is the uniform testimony of writers who have described the condition of Europe down to a period as late as that of the Reformation, and even later.

In this view of life, so strange to us, there was more reason than appears on the surface. The source of the contempt felt until modern times for those whose lives were passed in trade or in industrial labor, as very plainly appears, was this, that until a period comparatively recent these pursuits were entirely confined to slaves or to a servile class. The emancipation of labor,



then, and its elevation to its condition in our time, when we hear so much of its dignity, was the emancipation of those who labored from slavery, and from that taint which in public opinion in Europe has always affected everything connected with slave labor. The history of the laboring classes in Europe is the history of the progress of the larger portion of the population from slavery to freedom. I have already given a sketch of the history of those who, it was said, served the State by their swords, and of those who served it by their prayers: I now propose to say something about the history of the remaining class, those who preserved it by their labor, a subject of far greater dramatic interest, in my opinion, than the others.

We must go to the history of Rome for a knowledge of the beginnings of the laboring class in Europe, just as we go there as to the source from which we must derive our information concerning the early history of the noble and the priestly classes which ruled in the mediæval time.

The slight esteem in which labor and the useful arts were held in the early history of the republic was due perhaps originally in some measure to the few wants of the people as compared with those of later times. While Rome was struggling not for supremacy but for existence, she regarded as desirable only those things which made good soldiers. She encouraged agriculture because it gave her strong recruits for her armies and fed them; but the artisan lived poor and despised in his workshop,

with no prospect of bettering his condition. Like all classes in Rome, the workmen were enrolled in special organizations called *collegia*, or trade corporations. Their members were few, and were made up of those engaged in the commonest handicrafts, such as would be required by a people with the simplest wants. All this was changed when the Roman armies carried their conquests beyond the boundaries of Italy. Sicily, Spain, Africa, and Greece were pillaged, after the manner of ancient warfare, of their richest treasures for the benefit of the Roman republic, the population of the city, and its armies. At once the ancient simplicity of habits was exchanged for the wildest extravagance and luxury. A very large portion of the booty of these wars consisted of vast numbers of slaves, many of whom, both male and female, especially those who were brought from Greece and Syria, were not only persons whom we should now call of liberal education, but many of whom also were the most skilled artificers then known to the world in all that ministers to a taste for refinement, culture, and luxury.

The work of these slaves soon made Rome a very rich city ; but it did not, as may be supposed, elevate the condition of the native free Roman workman, whose labor was brought into competition with that of the slaves who had been so highly trained. So hopeless, indeed, did the struggle become that it seems to have been almost wholly abandoned ; and it may be said here that one great cause of the final decay of the Roman power was the constant use of slaves in increasing

numbers to the exclusion of free laborers in every kind of skilled labor. This practice turned the poorer Roman citizens into a hungry mob, crying *panem et circenses*, and later it destroyed agriculture in Italy, and with it the free population it nourished, giving up the soil to sheep pastures, which could be managed more profitably, because more cheaply, by slaves than by free-men. *Latifundia perdidere Italiam*, is the profoundest reflection of Pliny the Elder; and these three words, according to him, contain the secret of the history of the downfall of the Empire.

The slaves, in vast and increasing numbers, were employed in three different ways at Rome. They were occupied either in the personal service of their masters, manufacturing within the house what was needed for its use and adornment, or they were let out to others for similar purposes, or they became gladiators in the cruel amusements of the amphitheatre. Their skill in all the mechanic arts had a deplorable influence upon the condition of the free laborers, who became, owing to the impossibility of competing with the servile labor, the most troublesome and seditious class throughout the Empire. Their *collegia*, which had been originally intended for their protection, were suppressed as dangerous to the State during the great civil and social wars. They were abolished because they had then become asylums for the discontented; and this policy was kept up for the same reasons, and from the same fear, by the Emperors for nearly a century. Later, the utter prostration

of industry made it necessary to reorganize these corporations, with the hope of finding employment for the vast mass of *proletarii* whom the State, from motives of safety if not of humanity, was called upon to provide for.

In the third century, the conquests ceasing, the number of slaves grew less; the larger portion of the working class, however, were, although nominally free, the children of slaves or of freedmen; and the *collegia*, which were originally designed to protect their industry by giving them a monopoly, became a powerful means in the hands of the government for controlling them. This class, even when its labor was most necessary, was still without social position or influence in the Empire. It was composed chiefly of three groups, all, of course, free, or at least not slaves: 1st, those who worked in the public service in the construction of roads and buildings, and in preparing the material necessary for the equipment of the army; 2d, those who cultivated the public lands of the Empire in order to provide the food with which the government undertook to supply the mob of Rome, the specially dangerous class of the Empire at that time; and, 3d, those who worked at any trade which they preferred.

The constitution of these *collegia* interests us specially because they were the model upon which the *jurandes* and *gildes* of later times were formed. The privileges which were attached to them do not seem to have compensated for the obligations which were forced upon

their members. They had the monopoly of production, each in the work of its own particular *collegium*; they were, at least for a long time, exempt from the military service of the State, as well as from being forced to assume the doubtful and costly honors of the *curia*; but such exemptions were considered as marks of ignominy, and not as privileges conferred. There was among these workmen none of that individual liberty which, begetting rivalry and enterprise, we regard, in modern times at least, as the strongest incentive to skill in one's calling.

In the Roman Empire every one was bound, as if by a chain, to the special work in which he was engaged. The colonist was tied to the land, the public officer to his charge, the *curialis* to his *municipium*, the merchant to his shop, and the workman to his *collegium*. If there was any liberty of action, it belonged not to the individual, but to the corporation of which he formed part, which both in law and in fact absorbed the workman.

This method of organizing labor, which became at last only an ingenious system of keeping a troublesome element of the population in due order and subordination, was one of the characteristic peculiarities of the Roman administration, and it was swept away by the invasions. Industry upon any large scale was, of course, destroyed by this terrible calamity, and there was nowhere any recuperative power: the individual had long before perished in the embraces of the State. One of the first results of the invasions, so far as the condition of the laborer was concerned, was to bring him back again into

that state of slavery from which he had been at least measurably emancipated by the system of the Roman *collegia*. The towns in Gaul through which the invaders passed were filled with workmen, and there were among them many, no doubt, nominally freemen; but the invaders took little heed of the free or the enslaved condition of the working class, and made them all, indiscriminately, captives,—prisoners of war,—and therefore they all became slaves. The conquerors soon became embarrassed by the number of their captives, and even by their skill in handicraft; for the Teutonic invaders had few of the wants which the luxurious and civilized Romans had felt when they had forced their captured slaves to minister to them. Thus not only in Gaul, but wherever Roman civilization had taken root, these slaves were very much in the way, for in the new life which the Teutonic invasion introduced there seemed no place for them. Hence at no period of history has there been greater suffering on the part of an industrious and intelligent population of skilled laborers than when it was found that, as there was no longer any demand for their skill, they must engage in the rudest and most unaccustomed labor as slaves under barbarous task-masters.

So much for the trade organizations in the cities of the Empire. The position of the rural or agricultural laborer was somewhat different. He was called *colonus*. Men of this class were not slaves; in this sense, at least, that they were not regarded by the law as mere chattels. They

might serve in the army, and contract a lawful marriage ; and a slave could do neither. But they were bound to the estate of the proprietor on which they lived, *adscripti glebæ* ; they were subject to corporal punishment, and had no redress at law for the hard treatment of their masters ; but, on the other hand, the owner could not separate them from the domain and sell them, and their tenure was secure on the payment of a fixed rent. At the epoch of the invasions, then, the mass of the rural population throughout the Empire were *bond-laborers*, not slaves in the strict legal sense. Let us mark the transition from the Roman *colonus* to the Teutonic serf or villein ; for the last relation grew out of the first as a consequence of the invasions.

In the first place, the Roman laborer had, it is true, been in dependence upon the owner of the soil and attached thereto, but he was also the subject of a central general government whose laws he was bound to obey. But among all nations of German blood, power originally rested upon two foundations : first, upon the possession of land ; and, secondly, upon distinction in rank. As a result of the invasions, the central general government being destroyed, the proprietor of the land became the sovereign of all those who dwelt upon it. Sovereignty and property, therefore, were vested in the same hands, and the laborer had no guarantee against oppression in the provisions of a State law which was equally binding upon him and his master. This was the first step made in the change of the condition of the bond-laborer to

that of the Middle Age serf. But it was precisely this arbitrary and capricious despotism, which was a characteristic feature of the feudal system, which rendered that system so oppressive to the laboring man of the mediæval period.

It is important to observe that in those days of oppression the complaints of the patient workmen were directed not so much against the exactions of the lords, excessive as they were, as against the uncertain and capricious character of those demands; in other words, to the absence of contracts which would clearly settle their mutual relations. The struggle between the laboring class, both in town and in country, against the noble class, after the lands had been divided among them, and during the whole continuance of the feudal system, was a struggle therefore not so much to diminish the amount of service rendered the lords as to settle clearly the nature of that service and to make it fixed and certain. The abolition of *villénage* or serfdom was merely the substitution of a contract for fixed service for the arbitrary and capricious demands of the feudal superior; and the freedom of the towns or *communes*, as it was called, was not a freedom from paying taxes to the lord, but freedom from being pillaged at will by him,—a privilege purchased, as we have seen, by the payment of a certain sum of money mutually agreed upon. As serfdom had been substituted for the *colonatus*, contracts between the lord and his vassal took the place of the services formerly rendered. The change in both cases was due largely to economic



considerations, and when such contracts could be made and kept, it is evident that the chains of feudal dependence were becoming loosened; and this formed, as we shall see, the stepping-stone by which the laboring class reached at last, after the severest struggles, the condition of absolute freedom.

Out of the condition caused by these changes grew that class of farmers, or peasant proprietors, or freeholding yeomen, as they have been differently called in different countries of Europe, which forms, as has been said, the backbone of modern society. Observe the process by which all this was brought about. It was due in a very small measure to the influence of that sentiment of piety and benevolence which has sometimes taught men the injustice of holding their fellow-men in bondage, or even to the example of the Church itself in dealing with its own serfs, but rather to purely selfish and economic considerations. It was a scheme on the part of the lords to secure from their estates larger and more certain revenues than they had previously yielded, and was founded on the principle that in every way, as well for the laborer as for the master, free labor was more profitable than slave labor.

These contracts for fixed rents and services seem to have been extended gradually to all rural laborers, whether technically bond or free, so greatly had they proved to be of advantage to the lords. Thus we see now clearly that, out of the pure selfishness of the lords, a system, which was intended by them only to increase their wealth and

power, in the end really became one out of which grew the first and the most permanent characteristic of modern freedom,—namely, the right of each man to sell his labor at his own price. Not only this, but, in the universal greed of the lords to increase their wealth, slaves had been contracted with on the same footing as other laborers, so that practically an equality of condition was established between these classes, and slavery, which, in one form or another, had been the normal condition of the larger portion of the human race in all previous history, gradually died out in Western Europe, simply because it was not profitable, but not before giving birth to the modern freeman.

These movements, which extended over all that part of Europe which had been occupied by the Teutonic invaders, and which gradually, during several centuries, were changing its social condition, have always seemed to me among the most striking illustrations in history of that Divine providence which makes not merely the wrath but the selfishness and wickedness of man to praise Him. This mighty revolution, the results of which were, of course, wholly unexpected, was so silent in its movement that we can scarcely tell when it began. But we do know that its immediate cause was the absolute necessity of raising money in large sums to enable the kings to prosecute their wars. Thus, we find in England in the early part of the fourteenth century Edward III. “selling manumissions,” as it is politely described, to the serfs on the royal demesne, and in

France, about the same time, Louis X. (le Hutin, Headstrong) issuing his famous edict by which his serfs were permitted to buy from him their freedom at a round price. The example of the kings was soon followed by the great vassals of the crown, with what effect on the condition of the serfs we have seen. This was the starting-point not merely in industrial freedom for the serfs and laborers throughout Europe, but, in England at least, the beginning of their political freedom also. Such laws as the Statute of Laborers, which professed to regulate arbitrarily the rate of wages, or the Statute of Apparel, which undertook to prescribe the cost of the dress of the laboring class, however much they might have been adapted to serfs, who held everything at the mercy or caprice of the lord, were entirely out of place as a mode of ruling free laborers, as the government found to its cost in various uprisings of the population.

In regard to the working classes in the towns, and their relations to the governing power, there are three things to be considered separately if we wish to get an accurate idea of their condition. There is, first, the nature of the government of the towns themselves, which at an early period, comparatively, was withdrawn from the feudal lords and vested in the local magistrates; secondly, there were the trade corporations in the towns, one for each principal branch of industry, whose members were the sole electors of the town magistrates; thirdly, there were the *gildes* or *confréries*, composed

of artisans, usually, but not always nor necessarily, forming part of the trade corporations. The mediæval life in the towns rested upon this threefold basis. Out of this city life, and by virtue of the education and experience he gained there, came that prominent figure in our time,—the modern skilled workman.

I have described in a previous chapter the manner in which the towns secured their freedom from feudal servitude and the transfer of the local government to their own magistrates. The question now presents itself how this change of the governing class affected the traders and mechanics, the *bourgeoisie* as well as the workmen, who had no vote in the choice of their rulers. According to Mr. Green, the rights of self-government, of free speech in free meeting, of equal justice by one's equals, were brought safely through the feudal tyranny in England by the traders and shopkeepers of these towns, organized as they were after they became free from feudal servitude. It seems to me that the claim is somewhat too broad; for, while unquestionably this organization produced much political activity in a certain class, it was so narrow and contracted in its scope that it concerned itself very little with the interests of the larger portion of the inhabitants. The *commune* (which was the technical name of a freed city in France) had its own revenues, raised by means of taxation and of loans. The magistrates were generally chosen by the members of the trade corporations only. The kings were favorable to the establishment of free cities upon

the lands of their great vassals, and frequently aided the townsmen in their efforts to secure their exemption from feudal servitude, with the object, however, of lessening the power of the feudal lords against the crown. On their own royal domains they discouraged the establishment of free cities, lest the inhabitants might be thus withdrawn from their absolute control. Wherever, however, a free town was created, there the political education of the citizen, by means of his participation in the government, began. In this way, both in France and in England, the power of that class which had, in the end, so large a share in the government of both countries,—a class composed in each of the towns of the principal traders and mechanics, and called in England burgesses, and in France *la bourgeoisie* or *tiers-état*,—took deep root. The organization of the town corporations was the means by which this class entered upon political life, and it thus took a long step towards acquiring that social position and influence which it has ever since retained.

What, then, were the ideas, what was the policy, which guided these town governments in the exercise of their functions? The best answer is to be found in this consideration, that the political system in the towns was founded upon citizenship, acquired only by virtue of membership in some one of the trade corporations existing in them. From the beginning it had some of the features of an oligarchy. It was when the inhabitants were working industriously and trying to accumulate property that they felt most keenly the feudal oppres-

sion of their seigneurs and strove to form these gildes, or *corps de métiers*, as they were called in France, for their mutual protection. The motive of the desire for the freedom of the towns was the security of their possessions; and the money to purchase that freedom from the lords came from the tradesmen, who wished to insure their property by doing away with any pretext for arbitrary acts. Hence the first thing done by these free towns was to adopt measures, after their own peculiar fashion, to protect the rights of labor. And these rights were not at all the rights belonging in common to all workmen, but the particular rights and privileges of certain workmen formed into trade corporations within the town, not unlike, in many respects, our modern trade-unions. These rights were claimed and strenuously defended for centuries against any interference from outside the town, and were in no way founded upon any theory of the equality of all workmen, but were rather regarded in the nature of privileges. The avowed policy was everywhere to establish monopolies in the fullest sense of the word, to maintain a discrimination against those of the non-privileged class, both outside and inside the town. Their constant efforts, as long as they remained self-governing, were thus directed to the special protection of those of the inhabitants who were members of the trade corporations, and this was done by maintaining their exclusive right to work within the town, by jealously guarding against the intrusion of strangers into the trades carried on there, and, in short, by every

measure which made the labor of those they represented more profitable. They did not even hesitate to reduce the number of the workmen, so as to make the gains of those who had the exclusive privilege of work greater.

For all practical purposes, then, the government of the free towns was merely the government of the trades forming their constituency, and their policy was a policy of trading privilege and monopoly. While this policy, perhaps, was necessary for their own protection against the lawlessness of the time, and while no doubt it taught the lesson which is the first to be learned in a popular government, the habit of mutual aid for mutual protection, yet it is none the less true that the system was wholly out of sympathy with that generous recognition of the universal rights of man, as such, to freedom, which is the most characteristic and fruitful truth of our own times.

On what may be called the educational side the government of free cities had some important advantages. Its policy of the jealous exclusion of strangers from the trades of the town made it necessary that those trades should be so organized that their members should produce good work, and that they should come, with that object in view, under the strictest discipline. Each of the trade gildes was provided with an elaborate organization to effect this purpose. The members were divided, as a general rule, into three classes,—the apprentices, the workmen, and the masters. The apprentices, who were of a limited number (and usually the sons of the work-

men or of the masters only were admitted to that position), were most carefully trained and instructed in their particular art, or mystery, as it was called. No one was allowed to pass from a lower grade to a higher in the gilde without the strictest examination, not merely as to his capacity as a workman, but as to his moral character also. Those who aspired after this examination to the place of master-workmen in any particular craft were obliged not only, as I have said, to have passed a long period of severe apprenticeship, but were also required before their admission to the full privilege of a master to produce a specimen of their skill in their particular art (called in France a *chef-d'œuvre*), which was rigorously criticised and often found deficient by the examining board, composed of the chiefs of the company. The result of all this education was to produce, necessarily, thoroughly skilled workmen in numbers probably greater than any other system of the organization of labor has been able to do. Again, every piece of work made by any member of the craft at any time, no matter what was his grade in the company, was subjected before it was offered for sale to a minute and thorough inspection by officers of the body. One obvious result of such a system was to maintain among the artisans, members of the same gilde, a strong feeling of pride in their work and of attachment to the company which protected them in it. But it may be readily inferred that this sentiment was not confined in its influence upon the workman merely to his special position as such. It no



doubt nourished in him some of the most important characteristics of the true citizen, such as love of industry, and personal independence, and city pride; and all this is to be considered as a compensating circumstance when we remember how completely the system was based upon the monopoly and exclusive privilege of the few.

There was another peculiarity which grew out of the government of the free cities by means of these trading corporations, which had an immense influence upon city life during the Middle Age. Inseparably associated with each of these trade companies, although not always forming part of it, was a charitable organization for the benefit of its members, called in England a *gilde*, and in France a *confrérie*. The principle of these organizations, which was that of the mutual aid and protection of its members, is among the oldest and most permanent ideas of the Teutonic race, and was in full operation for certain purposes long before free cities or trade corporations were thought of. In the days before the invasions societies existed in Germany and the North of Europe which were called *gildes*. They were so called because the word signifies a feast, given at the common expense of the society whose members partook of it, and at these feasts it was the custom for those present to take an oath to aid and protect each other. Here we see the first germ of that spirit of association and of mutual and voluntary helpfulness which has always distinguished, and to this day distinguishes, the Teutonic from the

Latin races. The aid and protection which these *gildes* were organized to afford were not of that kind which their successors were called upon to give. The ancient Germans, of course, had no mechanic arts and no commercial occupations; but in the absence of anything like law or public order in those rude days they felt the need of seeking by combination with their comrades that protection for their persons and their property which their nominal chief could not or would not give them. The weak, therefore, associated themselves with the strong to make a common resistance to oppression; they bound themselves to each other by a solemn oath; they chose their leaders, and, when they became Christians, a patron saint; they ate and drank together at certain fixed periods; and, emboldened by their numbers, they asserted their power and became in time themselves the lawless oppressors of others.

Out of this ancient and persistent habit of mutual helpfulness grew what was known in England's Saxon days as *frank-pledge*, by which, as I have before explained, a responsibility for the acts and offences of each member of the society was attached not primarily to himself but to his family, and especially to the *gilde* to which he belonged, and this *frank-pledge* thus became an important instrument of social order in those days. Any member could call upon his *gilde brothers* for assistance in case of violence and wrong; if falsely accused, they appeared in court as his *compurgators*; if poor, they supported, and when dead they buried him. On the other hand,

each member was responsible to the *gilde*, as it was to the State, for order and obedience to the laws. A wrong of brother against brother was also a wrong against the general body of the *gilde*, and was punished in the last resort by expulsion, which left the offender a lawless man and an outcast. In its main features this was the organization of the *trade gildes* in towns, exclusive monopoly of work, and charitable aid to suffering comrades. But we must not forget that while the regulations of the trade corporations were founded upon the selfishness and cupidity of the citizen and the artisan, those adopted by the *gildes* or *confréries* were taught by that Divine charity which is the source of the virtues of the man and the Christian.

The members of the *confrérie* concerned themselves about the happiness of their fellow-members, as the burghers did about their privileges. When in danger they invoked the Divine aid, and caused prayers and masses to be said for the benefit not merely of their own souls, but for those of their relations, friends, and benefactors also. Their object was to make of the members of the *gilde*, who were also generally of the same trade, one family united in one faith under the protection of the same saint and brought into close relations by the enjoyments of a common social intercourse. No one of the members was permitted to live in poverty: the two opposite principles of pride in their *gilde*, and the charity which was its ruling motive, alike forbade it. Like some of our modern institutions of charity which

are the direct and legitimate successors of the gildes of the Middle Age, such as the Free-Masons, the Odd-Fellows, and kindred associations, a good deal of both time and money may have been wasted in processions, regalia, and the like, while they were carrying on some of their work; and yet we must not forget that the great motive and object of that work was to aid those whom sickness or misfortune had made helpless. When we think of the civilizing power in our days among workmen of mutual aid societies, we may imagine the influence of organizations with the same end in view in the Middle Age. Close union between workers at the same trade, social enjoyments in common, innocent recreation for the workman who was almost constantly penned up in his shop, prayers said in common, a large spirit of charity and mutual succor from the ills of poverty,—such was the ideal life of workmen belonging to the privileged gildes in the free cities of the Middle Age. Could it have been made the real and actual life of such workmen, what a paradise society would have become!

There can be, I think, no doubt that the privileged workmen in the towns (not the mass of the laboring population outside the gildes, who, as I have said, like the *proletarii* or the *miserrima plebs* of Rome, were in fact, if not in name, mere slaves) were, on the whole, more than contented with their position. The workman loved his gilde; he felt that he had not been forced by the despotism of a master to enter it, as the Roman workman went into the *collegium*, whether he

would or not. Besides, he felt that he had reached the rank he held in the *gilde* by his own efforts, and he fancied that the privileges which he enjoyed by virtue of his membership had come down to him from the remotest antiquity. He was proud of his rights, with that sort of intense pride which poor human nature always feels when it is conscious that it has the exclusive possession of a privilege. That privilege which he guarded with such jealous care was as his life-blood, for by it he and his family were protected not merely from the rivalry of strangers in their trade, but also from the arbitrary caprice of the lord. Besides this, he generally helped to choose his own magistrates, aided to enforce the laws he had had a part in making, was judged by his own peers, and generally took a considerable part in the government of the town in which he lived, the *gilde* to which he belonged being both a subdivision of the municipality and a school of political education.

The movement which resulted in rendering both in the towns and in the rural districts the feudal dues a fixed and not an arbitrary sum was not freedom in our sense, but no doubt it was the first step made by the working class in both towards political liberty and social equality; but the goal was far distant, and the path by which they reached it a most difficult one. Such was the oppression of labor by arbitrary exactions in France that an agreement on the part of the lords to be content with any portion of it, no matter how large, pro-

vided that portion was a fixed amount and sum settled beforehand, was regarded as an immense boon. But neither in the towns nor in the country was the workman long permitted to be under the delusion that he had been an immediate gainer by freedom from feudal services. For the arbitrary feudal dues were substituted fixed taxes to the towns and the king, the only change being that they were regularly levied and constantly increased in number and in amount. It would be impossible here to enumerate all the burdens which the fiscal ingenuity of the ministers of the King of France and of his great vassals, who were all petty sovereigns, imposed upon the products of labor for many generations. A glance at some of them is instructive, especially if the history of England at contemporaneous periods, so far as it affects the labor question, be kept in view. There was the *taille*, a general tax levied upon the presumed value of each person's estate, the *hauban*, on its product, the transportation-tax, road-tax, ferry-tax, river-tolls, tax on all sales either of produce or merchandise. These are only specimens of the many vexatious claims which the king or the lord who was the sovereign made upon the inhabitants of town or country. Then in addition there were the *corvées*, the pressure of which was most felt by the rural population, such as the obligation of each peasant to have his grain ground at the lord's mill, his grapes turned into wine at the lord's press, and his flour made into bread at the lord's bakery, and all this, of course, at the lord's prices.

Under such a system, as the misery of the people increased the productiveness of labor diminished, and the wonder is that the French workmen were not wholly crushed; but patience was for a long time the badge of all their tribe, and the spirit of resistance seemed driven out of them by the habit of slavery. It was not until seven-eighths of the population of France found that four-fifths of the product of their industry were taken from them to support the other eighth of the population, composed of the nobles and the clergy (who paid no taxes and were subject to no *corvées*), in idleness and luxury, that their large stock of that virtue became at last exhausted. Then wide-spread revolt, under the name of *La Jacquerie*, among the peasants and the unfranchised workmen of the towns, added during the fourteenth century the misery of civil war to the horrors of the English invasion, and to the wretched condition of those who depended upon the reward of their labor to keep them from starvation. These revolts only weakened the people, and were powerless to effect a change. The increasing expenses of the kings of the Valois race, owing to their wars and the extravagant habits of the court, made necessary new expedients still more oppressive than the old of raising money from the exhausted population. The unwillingness or inability of the States-General, which was supposed to represent all classes in the kingdom, to afford any relief, and the harsh exercise of the royal authority in enforcing its demands upon those towns which had once been its allies in subverting

the overgrown pretensions of the feudal nobility, drove the people to despair. All this, persisted in for centuries, with an utter disregard of the welfare or happiness of the people, could have but one ending; and that was reached in the terrible vengeance of the French Revolution. Even those who at that time looked back most calmly on the history of their country felt that that history taught them that there could be but one remedy against a continuance of the horrors from which they had suffered for more than five hundred years, and that was to be found in the utter destruction of the privileged classes, the clergy and the nobility of France. That revolution was simply an explosion of the dangerous elements which had been gradually gathering in the heart of the country since it had become apparent that the promise of freedom to the working classes and of representative institutions was never to be fulfilled. They never forgot that this promise had been constantly broken by the rulers of France ever since the days of Philippe le Bel. The French Revolution, then, first gave to traders and mechanics on the Continent of Europe political and social equality, and hence placed upon a permanent basis the influence and control of the class who are such conspicuous actors in the social life of our time.

The contrast between the history of France and that of England, so far as the labor question is concerned, is very striking and instructive. The English were called by Napoleon I. "a nation of shopkeepers;" and it is



certain that the legislation of the country, from the time of the early Norman kings to the present, has been dictated by an unceasing effort to extend the influence in the government of the country of the trading classes. The feudal system, and afterwards the autocratic monarchical system, were thoroughly organized and established in England, but neither of them was strong enough to resist the force of enfranchised workmen contending for the rights of labor. By the charter of Henry I. (1071-1127) the king promised that the barons should be forced to do justice to their serfs, and to renounce the practice of tyrannical exactions from them. His grandson, Henry II. (1178), among other reforms, divided the kingdom into six judicial circuits, the courts in which were presided over by judges of his own appointment, and whose functions were extended to the abolition of all feudal exemptions from the royal jurisdiction. The Magna Charta of King John (1215), besides establishing that fundamental principle of English freedom, "that no man in the realm should be deprived of his life, liberty, or property, except by the judgment of his peers and by the law of the land," provided that the serfs on the estates of the barons should be protected from their lawless exactions, in precisely the same terms as these barons themselves were guaranteed protection against the oppression of the crown. The towns, too, were secured in the enjoyment of their municipal privileges, in their freedom from arbitrary taxation, in their rights of justice and of common deliberation, and in their power to

regulate trade within their limits. But the great and fatal blow against the supremacy of the feudal system in England was struck when, in the reign of Henry III., Simon de Montfort, as has been explained in a previous chapter, summoned each town in the kingdom to elect two burgesses who should represent it in Parliament. Out of this revolutionary movement (1264) grew the House of Commons. This body, and especially the burgesses who represented the trading class in it, in the end directed the policy of the government. To the influence of this class we owe that policy in regard to trade and labor which, truly representing the English instincts in such matters, always makes itself heard with paramount authority in the House of Commons. Its history presents to us the most striking picture of the virtues and defects of a people whose civilization is the outgrowth of many and of diverse influences, but of none more potent than the desire to preserve the supremacy of British trade, which by many is regarded as the necessary result of a devotion to British interests.

## CHAPTER XV.

### MEDIEVAL COMMERCE.

WITH our conceptions of a true civilization is inseparably associated the idea of movement. In our estimate of the influences which control the destiny of a people, movement almost always signifies progress and improvement, and immobility, stagnation and sometimes decay. We think, for instance, of the history of a vast empire like that of China, and we see the same general ideas—religious, political, and educational—prevailing there now which have controlled the country for thousands of years, and that this condition is the result of a fixed policy of immobility in accordance with the views of all its great sages, philosophers, and statesmen. Although we cannot deny that in one sense the Chinese are a highly civilized people, yet we feel that from our point of view their system is wholly out of harmony with our ideal of civilization, simply because it is stationary and non-receptive, and therefore we regard their condition as non-progressive, if not actually retrograde. We do this, not merely because it is unlike our own, but because it is based upon the theory that it was completed for its own purposes ages ago, and because it carefully excludes what we have been taught from history to think is the most valuable peculiarity of any civilization, its

capacity for improvement. We believe that movement or change the result of a certain receptivity is essential to true progress, and hence we have come to consider these two things as bearing to each other the relation of cause and effect.

We have, however, also learned that it is not every cause which breaks up the monotony of a nation's life and disturbs its old relations, not every movement, in other words, which necessarily promotes civilization and progress. Take India for instance, a country which, from the time of the first Aryan invaders to the present, has been overrun by foreign arms and ruled by foreign dynasties, which has been the spoil of such scourges of God as Genghis-Khan, Tamerlane, and the long line of despots called the Great Moguls, to say nothing of the rule of the East India Company, and of its successor, the English government. This country has been subdued over and over again, and dynasties established by men differing in religion, race, and political ideas, having nothing in common but the lust of conquest; indeed, in its history there seems to have been always movement of a certain kind; yet, so far as Indian life and Indian habits, Indian civilization, in short, are concerned, the movement has been hardly more than a ripple on the surface; the result of it all has been conquest, and not assimilation and therefore gradual growth and change. Indian life in its essential features does not differ from what it was when Alexander the Great declared its great river the boundary of his Empire.

Hence movement in order to produce a fruitful civilization must be something more than mere conquest, or even the permanent occupation of one country by the people of another. I have endeavored to exhibit the great historical examples of the principle of progress resulting from true assimilation following the conquest of one country by another in the case of the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire. Under the circumstances which I have detailed, by means of the assimilation of the Teutonic principle of personal independence with the Roman organization of law and its supremacy, powerfully aided by the influence of a common Christianity, the civilization of our modern times grew out of these heterogeneous, if not opposite, elements. The glory of European civilization is that it is formed in no cast-iron mould, but is always more or less in a condition to be shaped by the ideas, discoveries, inventions, or new relations—the *environment*, as it has been called—which may grow up around it at any particular epoch.

During the darkest period of the Middle Age, after the fusion of the barbarian, the Roman, and the Church was completed, it seemed that the greatest danger to its life was from that immobility which is characteristic of Oriental civilizations settling upon it. I conceive that Europe was saved from the dangers of this immobility, that the life of her people was made not only more comfortable, refined, and cultivated, but also more liberal, comprehensive, and receptive, by the peaceable means of the more frequent intercourse of her people, not only

with their own countrymen, but also and especially with the Mohammedans of the East, through the instrumentality of commerce.

To nations at a certain stage of their life, which may be called the formative or receptive stage, commerce has always proved the great civilizer; and indeed I might go further, and say that just in proportion to a nation's foreign intercourse, not confining such intercourse to an exchange of commodities merely, has its civilization been promoted. The greatest States of antiquity gained their real and permanent influence from the political education and habits of mind which this intercourse fostered, a condition which became a more important element in shaping their life than even the changes which were the result of the wealth which commerce brought to them. Commerce followed in the wake of empire then, as it does now. What would have been the outcome of Greek civilization had it not been for the influence and power of the Greek commercial colonies in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea? and in what would the conquests of the Romans have differed from those of Attila and Tamerlane had not their intercourse with the Greeks added to their power of subduing and plundering nations the knowledge of the Greek art of civilizing them? Foreign conquests have a permanent influence only as they engraft the ideas of the conquerors upon the nations they subdue.

The principle of the necessity of intercourse with foreign peoples in order to better our own is a cardinal

principle with all students of the history of civilization. The human animal, like all other animals, is improved after a time by the infusion of new blood, which is only another name for new ideas. "If I were asked," says Sismondi, a writer not at all in sympathy with the practices of Catholicism, "what was the knowledge acquired during the Middle Age which did most to quicken and develop the intelligence of the people of that time, I should say, without the slightest hesitation, the knowledge of geography acquired by the pilgrims to the Holy Land."

Let us consider, then, the obstacles which for a long time during the Middle Age restricted that commercial intercourse which we deem so essential to progress, and then we may better understand the changes which took place in the whole aspect of society when commerce was revived and extended. That which strikes us most forcibly when we think of the condition of the people of Western Europe in the Middle Age is their isolation from the rest of the world, an isolation caused by the absence not only of commercial intercourse, but of intercourse of any kind, with the nations by which they were surrounded. There was, it is true, one common bond which united them,—that of the Christian faith, as organized on the fundamental principle of submission to a common spiritual father called the Pope; but the more closely they were tied together by such a chain as this the more repellent and unsympathizing they became to those outside of them. To maintain any

relations with the infidel Mussulmans, who at that time had the monopoly of the productive resources of the world, was a crime against the Church ; and intercourse with other Christian countries, then peopled by those called Greek schismatics, was an offence against the same authority scarcely less grave. Wars on a large scale, and between communities differing in religion, habits, and ideas, had ceased, so that the lessons which even that stern teacher had so often taught the world by educating a working system of an improved kind out of the conflict of hostile races were no longer learned. The consequence was that Western Europe, from the period of the cessation of the invasions down to that of the Crusades, had a population more ignorant, brutalized, and, in our modern sense, more uncivilized, than during the worst period of the decaying Roman Empire.

As if to make the contrast more striking, that portion of Europe then under the Pope's obedience was surrounded both on the east and west by communities differing from it in the form of their religion, but vastly superior to it in all that makes a civilized people. It is a humiliating confession for the student of Christian civilization to make, but it must be made if the truth is to be spoken, that Spain under the Saracens, Western Asia under the Caliphs of Bagdad, and even the Byzantine Greeks, in all the useful arts, as well in those which adorn life as in those qualities of culture, refinement, and general intelligence which raise a people in the scale of national well-being, were immeasurably superior to



the coarse knights, the coarser peasants, and the fanatical priests who at that time made up European Christian society. As I have often said, the seed was indeed there, but its growth was slow, covered up as it was by the protecting arm of the Church and choked by the dense ignorance of the people. It needed the warmth and light which came from other lands to quicken its life. In other words, there would probably have been no civilization, in our sense, in Europe, had there not been commerce with the East; and the history of the development of that commerce in all its far-reaching effects is the history of one of the richest and most fruitful sources of our modern life.

There is, therefore, a peculiar interest in the study of the history of mediæval commerce. The age stands out in striking contrast in this respect both with that which preceded and that which followed it. The Roman Empire, great as it was by its arms, owed even more of its greatness, or at least its permanent influence in the world, to its commercial intercourse. As soon as the Roman power was definitively established in Italy by the result of the Punic Wars, the Mediterranean Sea, the great basin of the civilizations of antiquity, bathing three continents with its waters, became the highway not merely to the farther conquests of its arms, but, what is more important, to its relations with peoples of a different type from its own. The Romans gained by these conquests and the intercourse resulting from them not merely power and wealth, but also a knowledge of that

art in which they have excelled any people in history, and which became the most characteristic and permanent feature of their policy,—the art of successfully governing peoples of different races and religions. That art rests mainly, I conceive, upon a spirit of comprehensiveness, the result of a large experience of different types, of which the wonderful organization of their law was the outgrowth. We may safely say that the Romans would never have adopted such a system had they confined themselves to Italy. This, however, was the general result, reached very gradually, and dependent in a great measure on the changes produced by the intercourse of the Romans with strange people, and the necessity of adapting their rule to foreign habits, and the introduction of a certain cosmopolitan spirit among themselves. We do not always get an adequate idea of the extent of ancient commerce, and especially of that of the Romans, so that we fail to estimate rightly the importance of its influence in history.

We must remember that the Romans, by their conquests and by their subsequent commercial intercourse, were brought into relations with the most wealthy and flourishing communities of the world. From Greece and the Greek colonies in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea they brought not only their literature and their laws (so potent in shaping their destiny), but also those habits and tastes for refinement and luxury and the means of gratifying them which made the Roman character during the Empire so different from what it

had been under the republic. In those days riches and culture were far more inseparable in men's minds than they have ever been since. All the precious products of the Greek cities, in Greece proper and in Asia Minor, flowed in abundant streams into one reservoir, the city of Rome, which thus became not only the Imperial city, but the richest city in the world. The love of luxury and the means of paying for its enjoyment stimulated in a wonderful degree commercial enterprise. The Romans, not satisfied with all the appliances of a luxurious life furnished by the wealth and productiveness of the cities on the Mediterranean, extended their covetous desires to farthest India. From the time of Solomon that vast country had been regarded as the source of fabulous riches of a kind produced only within its own borders.

To reach this *El Dorado* the Romans of the Empire established no less than three routes. The first was by way of Alexandria and the Nile, thence across the Isthmus to the Red Sea, and thence down the coast of Malabar; the second, through Syria by way of the famous city of Palmyra to the Persian Gulf; and the third, by way of the Black and Caspian Seas and the river Oxus. By these three routes the Romans received from India pearls and other precious stones, spikenard, myrrh, frankincense, silk, spices, precious marbles, slaves, women's dresses, girdles, etc. So immense was the demand, not of course in the city of Rome only, but among the wealthy in the Roman provinces also, for these articles,

and so high was their cost, that although the wines of Italy and Asia Minor, metals, arms, cloths, and the like, were exchanged for them, yet it is estimated by no less an authority than Pliny the Younger that besides all these things the amount of money sent by Rome to India for their purchase amounted yearly to fifty millions of *sestertia* (about two millions of dollars). The Mediterranean Sea, from the Gates of Hercules to the Bosphorus, continued as long as the Roman rule lasted what it had been in the time of its predecessors, the Phœnicians, the Carthaginians, and the Greeks, the highway of commerce and the true road to a more complete civilization. Roman merchants transported from Spain the metals with which that country abounded, and poured through Marseilles, an ancient Greek colony, that stream of trade which fertilized all the cities of Southern Gaul and gave them those monuments of civilization which even now in their ruin attest the Roman power. It is not usual to regard the Romans as a commercial people, and certainly, as I have said, the class engaged in trade was not held in honor in the Imperial city; yet of the two master-passions of the human mind, the love of gain and the love of war, it is hard to say which had more to do with extending the permanent influence of Rome in the world.

We come then to the Middle Age, the age of contrasts, so utterly unlike that which had gone before and that which succeeded it; when commerce, external and internal, had perished in the invasions; when the routes

by sea and land were forsaken and wellnigh forgotten ; when, in consequence of the theories of the Church, nothing was done to encourage peaceful intercourse with foreign countries ; when immobility, isolation, and, as a result, barbarism, took the place of enterprise, free commercial intercourse, and the civilization which had been attendant upon them. There can be no more striking picture of the darkness and terror of those days than this utter cessation of those relations of men with their neighbors which had been created and stimulated in the days of antiquity by the love of gain. Such a condition could not be lasting, for, had it been, the life of European society would have been degraded to that of savages ; but several centuries passed before there were signs of revival.

The dawn at last appeared on the borders of that Mediterranean Sea which had witnessed the decline of that commerce of which it had been the principal means of communication in the days of its glory. The causes which led to the founding of Venice are well known. A few inhabitants of the towns on the mainland of Italy, in order to save their property and their lives from Attila and his Huns, took refuge in the marshy islands which are found at the mouths of the rivers Brenta and Adige. There the barbarians, having no vessels, could not molest them, and there, deprived of all other means of gaining a livelihood, they began in a feeble way a commerce which gradually extended from one end of the Mediterranean Sea to the other, and made

Venice the richest and one of the most powerful States in Europe during the Middle Age, because she was the most commercial. At the other end of the Italian peninsula, Naples and Amalfi, towns which seem to have been practically independent in their government of the Greek Empire, of which they were the last relics in Italy, still kept up by means of a large fleet, to their own great profit and advantage, their commercial relations with the East. Pisa and Genoa emulated their example, and the commerce they carried on with Egypt, Syria, Constantinople, and the ports of the Black Sea not only enriched them, but filled the interior towns of Italy with Oriental products, stimulating the taste for that peculiar culture, refinement, and luxury which precious books, precious stones, and precious works of art never fail to foster. All this, of course, was the work of centuries; but it went on unceasingly, gradually melting the rugged natures of the conquerors of Europe wherever it could reach them, as the warm winds of the South the snows of winter.

Every movement of commerce in those days by the cities on the Mediterranean was a step forward in civilization. Nor must we suppose that this influence was confined to Italy. Three great transalpine routes were established, leading from the South to the North of Europe, which were made use of as soon as the merchant had reasonable security for the safe transportation over them of his merchandise which came from the East. These consisted chiefly of articles of luxury, and were

soon sought after with so much avidity by the rude population of Germany that the trade became a lasting and most profitable one. Two of these routes followed the course of the rivers Rhine and Danube, the one reaching the extreme north and the other the centre of Germany, and the third passing through the country from the foot of the Alps to the Baltic northeasterly.

On these three routes are to be found the most famous historical cities of Germany: they were the true, almost the only, centres of civilization in transalpine Europe in the Middle Age, and they were made so because they were the entrepôts of commerce between the East and the West. All this was, directly or indirectly, the work of the traffic on the Mediterranean kept up by the Italian cities I have named.

While the rest of Europe was in a state of stagnation, we should not forget that a great deal of the prodigious activity of these towns was owing to their having been self-governing. They were, therefore, able to adopt and carry out a policy suited to their own peculiar needs and position, and that policy was necessarily, in the confusion of the times, exclusively a commercial one. From the tenth century their ambition was, in true commercial spirit, to monopolize the trade of the Mediterranean, carrying on the business not for their own account only, but also for that of all their neighbors. The Venetian policy was, while maintaining with the greatest care the independence of the republic, to keep on good terms with the two opposite powers, the

Byzantine Emperors and the Emperors of the West,—a task in the fulfilment of which even their extraordinary skill sometimes failed. They succeeded more frequently by adopting a policy the basis of which at all times was the protection of their commercial interests. Their system, which was regarded in the Middle Age as a model of practical wisdom, was imitated by the other Italian commercial cities, and the result was that they became not only the providers of the wants of the world, but also set the fashions in all matters of taste and luxury to the rest of Europe, little considering, doubtless, that, while their sole object was to make money for themselves, they were unconsciously giving a characteristic tone to the general life of the time.

There are many aspects in which the influence of the Crusades may be viewed, some of which we have already considered; but the permanent result, about which there can be no dispute, was the change produced by them in the condition of the world by the increased intercourse between the East and the West to which they gave rise. When we remember that commerce, before the discovery of America, meant simply an exchange of commodities between the East and the West,—that is, between Asia and Europe,—and that intercourse, and especially commercial intercourse, between the people of these two different portions of the world was denounced by the Church as a crime because it regarded the Orientals as Infidels, it is not difficult to understand that wonderful changes must have been produced by any shock which



broke up this practice of exclusion. A curious and most unexpected result of the crusading expeditions should be noted. They were undertaken with the hope of making the line dividing the Christian and the Infidel broader and deeper; but the intercourse of those engaged on both sides, forced as it was, produced a directly opposite result, and made those widely-separated races respect each other more and more as they came to know each other better. It is amusing to read in contemporaneous accounts how each party regarded the other before they met as savages, or as worse, devils incarnate. It was long before the cultivated, polished, and luxurious Mussulmans could look upon the Crusaders in any other light than that in which the Romans had regarded the rude hordes of Attila, that is, as the mere offscouring of the earth; and so it is wonderful to observe how slow the soldiers of the Cross, with their lofty conception of the character of the Christian knight, were to recognize in Saladin a far truer and nobler knight than their own leaders, Richard Cœur de Lion and Philip Augustus.

When the Crusades began, the cities of Asia Minor were still the seats of wealth and luxury, which, indeed, they had been from the earliest antiquity; and, whatever may have been the opinion of the Crusaders concerning the religion of the Infidels whom they had come from the ends of the world to fight, it is very clear that they soon became alive to the new worldly pleasures with which these cities tempted them. They not only eagerly shared in these pleasures, but their tastes became so

formed by what they saw and enjoyed that they were not satisfied on their return to their homes to resume their former rude habits of life. All the appliances of luxurious living could at that time be found only in the East, and the desire to gratify the new taste stimulated to a remarkable degree the commercial intercourse between the East and the West. Whatever other countries of Europe lost in population and resources by the Crusades, it is very clear that these expeditions enriched Italy, and especially made the fortunes of the republics of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. These maritime cities, which already before the Crusades possessed an extensive traffic, gained immensely by these wars. Their fleets transported many to the Holy Land, and Venice at least, with characteristic commercial enterprise, forced those who desired to embark in her vessels to work their passage, so to speak, by insisting upon their capturing, for the benefit of Venetian commerce, Zara, on the Dalmatian coast, and Constantinople. These conquests gave Venice not only the trade of Syria, but extensive possessions on the mainland of Greece and in the Archipelago. Thus, while religion was striving to sever the population of the East from the West, the Infidel from the Christian, commerce was binding them with bonds which were not loosened until the discovery of the Western world removed the seat of trade from the shores of the Mediterranean to those of the Atlantic.

Thus much for the maritime commerce of the South of Europe. Nearly contemporaneous with it was a

movement of the same sort, but better organized, in the North, under the direction of a system known in mediæval history as the Hanseatic League. The word *Hanse*, in Norman French, signifies an association, and this association was formed of cities and princes in Germany and the North of Europe, without regard to nationality, who desired to trade with each other, and whose commercial intercourse could not be carried on safely or profitably in those wild times without the protection of a powerful confederacy such as this. The rulers of the petty principalities of Germany and the North not only did nothing to encourage industry and protect commerce in their States, but often despoiled both merchants and artisans of their wares in the towns, or robbed them while they were transporting them from one town to another. The towns became in this juncture, as so often, the true saviors of society, and their efforts to protect themselves and the fruits of their industry, no doubt, prevented the relapse of Germany to its original savage condition. These towns for our present purpose may be divided into two classes, the one the manufacturing, the other the commercial; the first, of course, chiefly in the interior, and the latter on the coast, principally, in the beginning, on the shores of the Baltic. The object was, first, to secure the safety of the merchandise transported from one of these interior towns to another from the attacks of the robber-knights, who were accustomed to plunder the merchants travelling on the great routes of trade, and then, by

means of the ships belonging to the maritime cities, to transport the manufactures of these towns to places in the North where they might be exchanged for the raw materials and products so abundant in that portion of the world. It was necessary, such was the lawlessness of the times, that these ships should be protected from pirates, just as those who journeyed by land had to be guarded from the attacks of the robber-knights.

The energy, vitality, and enterprise which the pursuit of industry and trade gives suggested to those towns interested associations among themselves as the most efficient means of mutual protection. By the year 1350 seventy of the principal cities of Germany and Holland formed a commercial confederacy with these objects chiefly in view. Nearly a hundred years before, the Hanseatic League, originally intended for the protection of trade both by land and by sea, and composed of cities on both shores of the Baltic and of the neighboring towns in Poland and West Russia, had been formed. All similar associations in Germany were soon merged in it. Of this league the famous city of Lubeck was chief and president. There were assembled within its walls at stated intervals Diets, composed of representatives of the towns belonging to the league, which enacted laws for its government and settled its general policy. This association, as time went on and its usefulness became apparent, grew most extended in its operations and formidable in its power, wielding an influence not inferior to that of any regular government in Europe, and yet outside

and independent of them all,—a curious and unique instance in mediæval history, not only of a veritable *imperium in imperio*, but also of representative government long maintained and completely successful in the objects it had in view.

The object of this association was, in one word, commercial monopoly, to be gained by acquiring the exclusive control of the carrying trade of the North of Europe. Its leaders wished to secure for it on a grand scale in the commercial affairs of Europe the same exclusive privileges which the members of the *gildes* or trade corporations possessed in the towns. We may form some idea of its power when we consider what it proposed to do, and what in the course of time it actually accomplished. It undertook to protect its members from oppression while engaged in carrying on their trade, to guarantee, by armed force if necessary, the security of all the commercial routes which the members might pass over, to enforce the observance, both by its own members and by the strangers with whom they traded, of wise commercial regulations, and to extend the commerce of the association as widely as possible, both by sea and by land. For these purposes the Hanseatic League raised armies, equipped vessels of war, made treaties and alliances with foreign powers, and, in short, for nearly five centuries exercised all the functions of a regular government in carrying out its plans. All this time, be it remembered, it was entirely independent of any government or country in Europe, and held them all in such

subjection by virtue of its monopoly of the trade of their subjects that it became a power of the first magnitude in the settlement of the general European policy.

The reason at the bottom of all this was a very simple, but it seems to us now a very singular one. It was this. In those days no country in the North of Europe had a national marine, such as those of the republics on the Mediterranean. There were then no national commercial interests, such as now form the basis of the national policy of at least all maritime nations, and commerce seems to have been regarded for a long time in that part of the world as affecting the important interests of the population hardly more than we should be by a change, for instance, in the methods adopted for the transportation of the mails. The feudal mind was never able to comprehend the far-reaching effects of a commercial policy, and of course never dreamed of its destiny when commerce should become king. It was not, in short, regarded as a national concern at all. It existed only, as was thought, for the supply of wants which were looked upon as mainly artificial, and therefore any agency which did this limited work well was considered all-sufficient.

A striking illustration of the indifference during the Middle Age to commerce as an affair of national importance and as a source of national wealth, and of the sudden change of opinion on this subject, at least in England, is found in the history of that country during the reign of Edward III. As is well known, the principal

agricultural product of England down to the middle of the fourteenth century was sheep's wool. This wool had long been shipped to the manufacturing towns in Flanders, where it was woven into cloth and sent back to England, together with whatever else of Flemish production its value would buy. This sort of trade had long continued in England, and was entirely in the hands of the agents of the Hanse, who had their gilde-hall in London, and whose ships carried the outward cargo of wool and brought back the homeward cargo of manufactured articles. But it seems to have struck that most sagacious of English kings, Edward III., that this was a process, so far as his own country was concerned, which might be called "burning the candle at both ends." He determined to stop it. He was without ships suitable for such a trade, and, like the other rulers in the North of Europe, he was wholly dependent upon the Hanse for the conveyance of foreign merchandise. But this did not deter him, and he issued an order that hereafter no wool should be exported from the kingdom, and no woollen cloths should be imported. By so doing he accomplished three things, none of which he had probably anticipated. 1, He laid the foundation of manufacturing industry in England; 2, he destroyed utterly the monopoly of English commerce by the Hanse; and, 3, he substituted for it the English mercantile marine, thereby creating two at least of the most important elements in the greatness and wealth of modern England.

But other countries in the North of Europe were not

strong enough to secure for their own vessels their own carrying trade and thus make themselves independent of the Hanseatic League. For more than two centuries the Hanse maintained its supremacy in the Northern seas, and kept up especially an active trade between the manufacturing towns of Flanders and those in Northern Germany and on the Baltic, in each of which it established a *comptoir*, or factory, managed by officers of the League, and from which, as entrepôts, the goods were distributed to places in the most remote parts of Russia, Poland, and Sweden. Notwithstanding the discomfiture of the League in England, commerce in the North remained under its control, for without its aid, in the existing condition of the world, its pursuit would have been wellnigh impossible. The Hanse took advantage of its position by forcing the States within whose territory were situated the towns with which it traded to make treaties with it, and to levy upon the cargoes transported by its vessels duties so much lower than those exacted from others that it soon crushed out all attempts at rivalry. This system of commerce prevailed until the discovery of America, and the consequent diversion of trade into new channels, and the establishment by the Northern powers of a national mercantile marine with special privileges and exemptions. The Hanseatic League had outlived its usefulness; but it was not formally abolished by the public law of Europe until the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, when, as we have said, the occasion for its peculiar service had long passed away.



Of course the commerce of the North produced no such sudden and extraordinary effect on the civilization of Europe as that of the Mediterranean ; yet in building up towns and in the exchange of commodities between them, a trade stimulated by the desires of people of widely diversified wants, it not only settled permanently the industrial status of Europe, but by so doing laid the foundation of a general policy, since adopted by all her statesmen, of protecting by treaty and legislation the interests of the trading and laboring classes of the nation.

There were various humanizing influences incidental to the prosecution of mediæval commerce which are sufficiently familiar, but which perhaps it may be well to recall here, because their influence reached into far later times. There was, for instance, the whole system of credit and banking in commercial transactions, which, it is true, grew out of the necessities of the case, but which was not only wholly out of harmony with the general tendencies of the Middle Age as I have had occasion to describe them, but in direct opposition to the authority of the Church, whose uniform testimony was that the taking of interest for the loan of money was a high crime. We have been taught to believe that the mediæval age was pre-eminently a religious age, in which Church authority was supreme. And yet, in striking opposition to this view, we find that when two motives of action, that of religion and that of gain, were set before large classes of men in those days, they never seem to have hesitated, any more than men now do, to risk their souls

if they could make money. They did this whether they were driving hard bargains with the Crusaders who desired to be helped on their way to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, or whether they were making their fellow-Christians pay, in defiance of the authority of the Church, high rates of usury.

Another great modern humanizing principle—"the noblest innovation," as it has been called, "of modern times"—is the practice, if not the principle, of religious toleration; and it had its origin in the intercourse of the mediæval traders. There is a universal religion, the obligations of which are recognized alike by Jews, Turks, Heretics, and Infidels, and that is one based upon the principle of fair and honest dealing between man and man. When the Christian merchants found that the followers of the False Prophet paid their debts punctually and fulfilled their contracts with the strictest honesty; when they found the outcast Jew always ready, as a capitalist, to assist them in any enterprise which promised gain in return for the money advanced; when traders were brought into daily intercourse with those whose religion differed from their own, and found how many ideas they had in common,—it was simply impossible that they should look upon and treat those not of their religion as children of Satan, such as the Church represented them. Thus, strange to say, the practice of toleration was largely due to the most selfish of human instincts,—the love of gain.

There was another change in the mediæval conception

of life produced by commercial intercourse which it is important to notice. The ideal of a perfect life in those days according to the Christian standard was *poverty*, the monastic life being regarded as the highest type because it was ascetic. Commerce and wealth stimulated the introduction of luxury, and habits of luxurious living became so general that neither the denunciations of the Church nor the sumptuary laws nor the statutes of Apparel enacted by the State could do anything, for a time at least, to check the wild extravagance of fashion. This was, no doubt, an evil while it lasted ; but out of it came in the end great good. If the people in modern times lead more cleanly, decent lives, in more convenient and comfortable houses, than they did in the Middle Age, it is due in a great measure not merely to the increase of wealth in itself, but to the higher standard of living which was made possible by the introduction into European life of many things which are now objects of the first necessity, but which in the rude life of the past were thought by the sober-minded to be sinful luxuries.

So we owe to mediæval commerce the birth of that benign system of international law which to-day is the only force that keeps each nation in its appointed sphere and enables it to do its appointed work without clashing with its neighbors. As there were no international relations in the mediæval era, the stranger, out of the jurisdiction of his immediate petty sovereign, was in the fullest sense an enemy and treated as such. There was one exception to this rule which painfully marks

the prevalence of class distinctions at that time. The noble, by virtue of his nobility, was the citizen of the Christian world. He claimed in all countries equal privileges, and they were accorded to him without hesitation. But the trader or the merchant, whose calling took him sometimes through a half-dozen miserable little principalities in as many days, had no such rights. If he were shipwrecked, his merchandise, if it were driven ashore by the waves, as well as the lives of those of the crew who might be saved, were by law at the mercy of the lord who owned the land upon which they were washed up. This was his feudal right; and in accordance with it the property was confiscated to his use and the crew became his slaves.

There was another practice in the mediæval era which may be mentioned to show not merely how foreign the spirit of the time was to the encouragement of commerce, but also to show what we have escaped from by the gradual growth of commercial ideas. This practice was founded upon what was called *le droit d'aubaine*, by which any stranger dying out of his own country was prohibited from making a will, and by which no stranger was permitted to receive a legacy from a subject of another jurisdiction. In either case an attempt to transfer the property worked its forfeiture, and it was confiscated to the lord of the fee. This was an extreme application of the principle of antiquity that no one who had not civil rights, that is, who was not a member of the particular city or people among whom he lived, could lawfully

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transmit property in any way. When we remember that there were no nations in the mediæval era in our sense, and that Europe was divided into a multitude of petty feudal sovereignties, each of which enforced this rule as against the other, we may form some idea of its destructiveness to that commerce whose existence is dependent upon the trust that contracts made in good faith shall never depend for their fulfilment on the contingencies of human life. This was one of the first subjects which occupied the attention of that diplomacy which grew out of the intercourse created by commerce. Shortly after the Crusades, Consuls were appointed by those republics trading in the cities of the East, to reside there and watch over the interests of their countrymen who might be engaged in trade, and shortly after, or rather more than a century later, Ambassadors, one of whose functions, at least, was to look after similar interests, were accredited by the sovereigns of Europe to those countries with which their intercourse was most frequent.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ERA OF SECULARIZATION.

I HAVE endeavored by the illustrations which I have given of the life and history of the Middle Age to make it clear that the most characteristic and prominent feature of that life was that which made it the era of authority, in special and striking contrast with the era of individualism, or that social condition in which the exercise of private judgment is regarded as the true rule of human action. It is hard for us to conceive, at the present day, when this right of private judgment is universally recognized, how far the opposite principle of authority was carried in mediæval times; yet we must try and gain some adequate conception of it, for thus only can we understand the basis not only of mediæval life, but of our own, as well as the cause for the striking difference between them. It is hardly too much to say that the contrast between the two eras is due perhaps quite as much to the controlling influence of one or the other of these two opposite principles as to any other cause.

In discussing the historical life of Middle Age institutions I have given examples of the universal and unchecked force of this principle of authority,—how it extended not merely to the control of the actions of men, but moulded the expression of all their thoughts

and opinions ; how it formed the standard of the conduct of their lives ; how for such purposes its recognition was not a matter of choice, like that of respect for public opinion in this day, for instance, against which men, if they be brave and honest enough, may sometimes fight, but a firm belief in a visible and omnipresent power possessing all the machinery and appliances of a thoroughly organized government for the purpose of enforcing its authority. We come now to consider how this era of authority thus apparently resting permanently upon a universally recognized basis was gradually supplanted by the great force of modern times,—individualism.

The power which shaped men's thoughts and lives in the Middle Age was, as I have explained, vested in the Church, and its ideal conception of human life was to make this world the city of God, built up under its authority and guidance. Above all things in the Middle Age men sought to be good Christians. The claim of the Church's jurisdiction extended to the whole of human life,—not merely to a man's acts, but to his opinions, and not merely to his religious opinions, but to his opinions on every subject of human inquiry and interest, however remote some of these subjects may appear to us to have been from the sphere of theology. For more than six centuries, as I have explained, the Church was the only tribunal of opinion recognized in Western Europe on all subjects, Divine and human. Its decrees were not always obeyed, but its jurisdiction was never questioned. Let

us consider for a moment the extent of its power outside of the theological domain proper. A life of poverty, for instance, was the highest form of life known to the Church, and was therefore so recognized by the people in the Middle Age. But what did this conception of life involve? Industry and commerce, the most fruitful of all the sources of civilization in modern times, had but a stunted growth, as has been seen, during the larger portion of the mediæval era. Not only were the rewards of industry, which now stimulate human activity so strongly, then regarded as objects wholly undeserving of the zeal and energy of the true Christian, but the means also by which such results are reached in modern times, such as the borrowing of money on interest, and commercial intercourse with those who were not Christians, were positively forbidden by the Church as highly sinful acts.

So, in regard to the sciences, all original investigation was prohibited by the Church, not because the Church was opposed to investigation of anything which in itself might be considered doubtful, but because all questions of science, as well as those of morals and divinity, were supposed to have been settled by the authoritative interpretation by the Church of statements found in the Bible. The earth's cosmogony was thought to be explained in that book as fully as the plan of redemption. Thus, the world could not move, because Joshua had commanded the sun to stand still; it could not be round, because the Bible was supposed to declare that it was flat; and the true object of maritime expeditions, if



they were made at all, should be not to enlarge the dominions of existing kings, or to increase the means of supplying the wants of their subjects, but to convert the savages that might be found in the new countries, and make them good Christians. And so with everything which is called in modern times science. It was not the Church's external force or pressure, at least in the earlier times, which indisposed men to investigate the forces of nature, but the mental atmosphere in which they lived,—the profound conviction which had grown with all their experience of life that the discussion of such problems was needless, because the Church, whose authority all recognized, had settled and decided them.

All this was destined to pass away; and I propose to consider some of the earlier steps in this process of change. It is usual to ascribe that great change which took place in Europe by which the mediæval era was brought to a close, to a general revolt of reason against authority, to a universal protest of the human conscience in favor of the right of private judgment against what are called the tyrannical usurpations of the Church. But this seems to me an inversion of the historical order. Men do not revolt against any system which has governed them for ages simply because of philosophical objections to that system. The first step is the one which they take when they feel keenly its practical inconveniences or grievances; this breeds discontent and opposition; and then it is time enough to seek for reasons to justify their desire for change, and to adopt measures to bring

it about. This is the course of all revolutions; and it was the course of that in which the revival of learning and the Reformation were the last and not the first steps.

The first symptom of the discontent which was fast growing in Europe in the fifteenth century with the all-pervading authority of the Church was, in general terms, restlessness. People were growing tired of the restraints which were imposed not so much on their opinions as upon their ordinary course of life. Men became more worldly because, as time went on, the world spread out before them irresistible temptations which had never been presented to their fathers. They grew less Christian in the Church's sense; that is, they gradually ceased to ascribe to the Church's typical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience that paramount importance which they had held in the control of human life in earlier days. They were none the less devoted sons of the Church and stanch advocates of its authority. Orthodoxy of belief and outward conformity have often co-existed with neglect of the practical duties of religion. They felt the restraint her laws imposed upon their desires none the less, however, and the result was that when they attempted to escape from these restraints a strange spectacle was presented of an endeavor to harmonize their own self-indulgence in those new ways of life which seemed so tempting with professions of obedience to the authority of the Church. The truth is, the world was tired of the restraints which the Church had imposed upon it, just as it had become tired of the

Crusades. People were weary with the practice of self-denial, not because they doubted the Church's authority and duty to enforce it, but because other objects, which were not consistent with a self-denying spirit, became more attractive to their minds and claimed their attention, such as love of adventure, the pursuit of riches, and fondness for luxurious living. In short, from a variety of causes, the era of secularization, in which the human side of man's life was chiefly regarded, was supplanting the era of authority, in which man's destiny in his future life had been the exclusive preoccupation of all.

Let us take some illustrations from instances of this change of mind or of public attention in Europe towards the close of the mediæval era proper, and we can then best see what objects were substituted for the previous exclusive devotion to the interests of the Church, and why their pursuit at last completely overshadowed the position which the Church had formerly occupied.

Perhaps the first great subject which interested in common the rulers of Europe, who may be considered the representatives of the public opinion of the time, when the bonds of the Church's discipline were felt less heavily by them, was a desire to build up in their respective countries *nations* in our modern sense,—that is, to establish a central monarchical authority with a uniform rule over a large district peopled by the same race. To do this it was necessary not only to suppress the local feudal sovereignties among whom the rule of the land and its inhabitants had been divided, but to give practical shape

also to a theory of exclusive nationality of which the Church had given no example and with which she could have no sympathy. The extreme outgrowth of this sentiment, it may be said, was the substitution of patriotism for religion, loyalty to the State for faith in the Church. The Church had always claimed universal sway, not merely from the nature of its constitution, of which the very essence was a common recognition of the equality of all mankind in its eyes and their obligation of obedience to a common rule, but also because, with its usual prescience, it foresaw that separate national kingdoms might mean in the end, as turned out to be the case, separate national Churches,—a condition of things in which the unity of the Church, and especially the claim of common obedience to the See of Rome, might be seriously endangered. The Holy Roman Empire was founded on this essentially anti-national theory.

But the Church was powerless to check the new-born ambition of the kings of Europe to found powerful nationalities and family dynasties. The movement was a general one, and its execution absorbed much of the attention heretofore given to Church questions, and directed the thoughts and actions of those who then ruled Europe into a different if not an opposite channel. There was as yet no open hostility to the Church; but a national policy of governing meant one not controlled by Church influence or authority. It is not necessary to repeat here the story of the process by which the great fiefs in different countries in Europe were gradually

annexed to the crown. It has been seen how Louis XI., in France, in the fifteenth century, by various means established the royal authority firmly throughout the kingdom and became King of France in reality as well as in name; how the power of the English nobility was ruined by the Wars of the Roses, which resulted in making Henry VIII. a more powerful monarch than any of his predecessors; how, in Spain, the various kingdoms of that country had become united under the sway of Ferdinand and Isabella, and a centralized monarchy had been founded by the suppression of all local jurisdictions, as well of the nobles as of the towns; how even in Germany, where the feudal principle, as opposed to that of centralization, finally prevailed, large states with distinct interests, such as Prussia and Austria, were created. Everywhere about the same time a common sentiment, the desire to establish distinct and powerful nationalities, prevailed.

The nation, or the king as representing it,—national or dynastic interests, in short,—soon occupied that foremost place in men's minds which they have ever since held, to the exclusion of the policy which had previously prevailed, of maintaining by secular means the authority of the Church. The creation of nationalities in the modern sense gave rise to a multitude of new and conflicting interests, and to policies for promoting them essentially worldly in the Church's sense. Their harmonious organization was a task of the most difficult and delicate kind, and engrossed the exclusive attention of the best

trained men ; and in the execution of such a work little or no aid could be expected from the theory or practice of the Church. Indeed, the advancement of many of those interests which had become essential to the nation's life, the chief object of which was the supply of needs mainly of a selfish and material kind, was inconsistent not only with the principle upon which the Church's authority was maintained, but also with that conception of the true ends of man's life which had been characteristic of the mediæval era.

Men's tempers were not changed, at least consciously, but the aim of their lives was totally different from what it had been. The rulers of Europe were quite as warlike in the twelfth century as they were in the sixteenth, but how different were the motives which guided them ! There were no national wars of ambition during the mediæval era : if an invasion took place such as that of France by England (during the Hundred Years' War), it was to support a claim, as in the case of Edward III., by inheritance, and not to extend dominion by robbery. The Church (sometimes, it is true, by making very fine and subtle distinctions) never recognized the lawfulness of war among Christian men, except as an appeal to God to decide the right. There was but one war, or one form of war, which the Church encouraged, and that was for the defence of the faith and the extirpation of the Infidel. But that reverence and obedience to the Church's authority which had moved all Europe, by the one common impulse which it felt during the mediæval era, to join at

the Church's command in an effort to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Infidel, was out of date in the middle of the fifteenth century almost as much as it is now. It was not because men had ceased to love war; but when nations became developed into nationalities, with a powerful national organization, they fought for different objects and were moved by different impulses.

The Church always claimed that one of the most important objects of her mission on earth was to secure peace and order. The history of the Middle Age would hardly prove that she had been successful in this mission; yet it is a significant fact that no sooner had the principle of nationalities become the settled policy of Europe in place of that of Church authority, than, for a time at least, confusion and anarchy everywhere prevailed. National rivalries were excited, and national wars—wars of ambition only, of which the desire to gratify the pride, to advance the family, or to extend the dominions of the rulers of the principal kingdoms, was the moving impulse—became for centuries the normal condition of Europe. It is hard to find any other name or motive, for instance, for such wars as the expedition of Charles VIII. against Naples, or for the interminable conflict between Charles V. and Francis I., in which Henry VIII. became involved. Still, these wars were the offspring of a national, or at least of a dynastic, impulse, and they not only directed men's attention to objects far other than those which the Church would have approved or encouraged in the day when it was the dominant power

in Europe, but they formed also a standard by which the decline of that power may be measured.

The Church itself at that time, strange to say, or rather its visible head, the Pope, had become so oblivious of the traditions of his high office as to be engaged in wars with the same worldly and ambitious ends in view as his fellow-sovereigns in Europe. The Popes set a bad example in the fifteenth century to those kings who loved war and who were striving by it to extend their dominions in order to gratify their ambition or to aggrandize their families. Towards the close of the Middle Age, in the fifteenth century, the Popes had ceased to rule Europe by that moral power which had been enthroned in the persons of such men as Gregory the Great, Hildebrand, or even Innocent III. Their authority as heads of the Church had not only sensibly declined, for reasons which I have fully discussed in previous chapters, but, strange to say, they themselves seem by their policy to have recognized the altered condition of the times. Hence they appear in the history of the fifteenth century as Italian princes, with the same anxious desire to provide for their families, to found dynasties, and to extend their territory, as moved in those days the other rulers of Europe in Italy and elsewhere, and no longer in the august and imposing form of God's viceregents on earth. Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., Alexander VI., do not seem a whit less worldly, or less moved by worldly ambition and policy, than those kings of Europe who were then striving to



cousolidate a power founded on purely selfish and dynastic interests.

The Popes in those days seem to have been regarded by their brother potentates as quite on a level with them,—that is, simply as rivals in pursuit of the same earthly objects. Hence one of the signs of the decadence of the papal authority was the readiness with which the Pope's territory was invaded by men calling themselves Catholics, whenever a policy of conquest adopted by any European power made it convenient to do so. In former ages and under the old Popes such an attempt would have been regarded as sacrilegious, and excommunication would have at once followed. Charles VIII., however, marched through the papal territory to his conquest of Naples without any fear of the Pope's weapons, spiritual or carnal, and would have hesitated as little to fight against the troops of the Church as against those of any Italian prince who might oppose his advance. The Popes in the fifteenth century were mixed up with all the intrigues for the dismemberment of Italy and with the claims made by each robber for a share of the spoil; and no wonder, when the august functions of the head of the Church were eclipsed by the pretensions of an Italian prince seeking only to extend his worldly power and to found a family, that the power which had so long ruled the destinies of Europe, which was, after all, a power on a moral basis, the public opinion of Europe, fast crumbled away.

The tradition of the time when all Europe obeyed one

spiritual head still survived, but, practically, long before the Reformation the bond of the old allegiance was broken. Men who cherished this tradition were struck with horror when they heard that Francis I., the eldest son of the Church, as he proudly called himself, had entered into an alliance with the Infidel Turk against Charles V., the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire,—that the lilies of France were mingled with the crescent of the Infidel in the assault upon the Christian Emperor's stronghold; but what must have been their dismay when they heard that this very Emperor, who theoretically held his office by the authority of the Pope, had not only besieged Rome with an army of German Protestant *landsknechts*, but had made the Pope prisoner, and that he had at last been crowned Emperor by this very Pope on condition that he would restore his family, the Medici, to the sovereignty of Florence! Thus, naturally and necessarily, the restraints of the era of authority became gradually loosened by the attitude which the Popes in the fifteenth century, who had been the heads of the system enforcing such authority, had assumed. It is impossible, it seems to me, to overestimate the encouragement given by these Popes to the substitution in Europe of the worldly and secular policy of the nation for the spiritual authority of the Church and exclusive devotion to its interests.

But besides this new policy of nationalities, with its disintegrating effect upon the Church's authority, various other tendencies, all leading to the same end, that of

subverting the exclusive authority of the papal system, combined to bring the mediæval era to a close and to awaken a permanent interest in a totally new class of subjects.

Men became worldly as their control over the forces of nature increased, and asceticism formed no longer the ideal conception of life. Wherever there was commerce, in Italy, in Flanders, in the towns of Germany, the new life penetrated. The great objects of men, as they grew richer, were to increase steadily the share of comfort accessible to all, to stimulate man's intellectual forces so that the fruit of utility in its widest sense should be produced in the amelioration of his condition and in the increase of his knowledge. Thus they sought to secure industrial development, lasting tranquillity, and universal harmony, to provide for the most thorough investigation of all subjects, and to encourage the appreciation of all objects of human and natural interest.

The luxury and magnificence of those who had become rich in commercial Europe in the fifteenth century were in as great contrast with that poverty of the preceding age, which the Church had exalted as the very crown of all virtues, as with the senseless vanity which is so characteristic of many rich people of our own day. Consider the manner in which the Medici employed their wealth (and they had hosts of imitators wherever the new tide of riches had reached in Europe), and mark the contrast between them and the mere rich man, both mediæval and modern. We should not forget that

the era of the highest glory of scholars in Italy, when their title to consideration had almost supplanted that of the authority which had so long ruled the world, and when they were honored as they had never been before since the days of Pericles, was the era in which great fortunes were first made in that country by trade. The Medici's private fortune, as it has been well said, was a sort of public treasury freely opened to learned men. Scholars were in those days the companions, friends, and correspondents of true merchant princes like the Medici in every part of Europe. Costly manuscripts were procured from the distant East for these scholars; their works of inestimable value were published at the expense of the merchants who had found out the noblest use of wealth. Statues and medals were sought for in the most distant regions that artists might study and imitate them; the learned were honored guests at the tables of the wealthy; and for the first time (alas! perhaps also the last) the rich man and the scholar met on those terms of cordial familiarity and sincere friendship which removed any sense of obligation between them, standing as they did on a footing of equality as man to man, and without a thought of any degrading relation as of an inferior to a superior. Such was the representative typical man in Italy on the eve of the Renaissance, or the age of transition from the mediæval to the modern era. I have dwelt upon his position and influence, not merely because the increase of the power of scholars marked the decadence of the Church's authority, but also because the

most hopeful era in European history was that in which scholars held their true place.

During the whole of the fifteenth century, everywhere in Europe where there were riches and that prosperity which riches bring, the new secular spirit was rapidly developed. In Flanders, which was then a hive of industry, we notice it, just as we do in Italy at the same period. "Man abandoned," says M. Taine, "the ascetic and ecclesiastical *régime* that he might interest himself in nature and enjoy life. The ancient compression was relaxed: he began to prize strength, health, beauty, and pleasure. On all sides we see the mediæval spirit undergoing change and disintegration. An elegant and refined architecture, very different from the early Gothic, converted stone into lace, festooning churches with pinnacles, trefoils, and intricate mullions, so that they became like vast caskets, the products rather of fancy than of faith as of old, less calculated to excite piety than wonder. In like manner chivalry, which in its earlier day was simply the highest lay service of the Church, became a mere parade. In Chaucer and in Froissart we are spectators of the knights of the time,—their pomp, their tourneys, their processions, and their banquets (all the marks of the new reign of frivolity and fashion), their extravagant and overcharged costumes, the creations of an infatuated and licentious imagination. In short, in France, in Flanders, and in Italy, the life of the court and the princes seems a perpetual carnival."

At the marriage of Philip the Good, Duke of

Burgundy (1420), the streets of Bruges were hung with tapestry ; for eight days and eight nights a stone lion spurted forth Rhine wine, while a stone stag discharged Beaune Burgundy, and at meal-time a unicorn poured out rose-water or *malvoisie*. "On the entry of the Dauphin into the city," says Taine, "eight hundred merchants of divers nations advanced to meet him, all clad in garments of silk and velvet. At another ceremonial, the duke appears with a saddle and bridle covered with precious stones ; nine pages covered with plumes and jewels followed him, one of the pages bearing a salad-bowl of the value of one hundred thousand crowns, the duke himself wearing jewels estimated in value at a million." And yet these men, in the midst of all this pomp, ostentation, and luxury, claimed to be good Christians, and especially good Catholics. If such was the case, it is clear that obedience to the authority of the Church, which during the Middle Age had enjoined the practice of asceticism and self-denial, was no longer yielded, just as the virtues which had been regarded of old as typical of the true Christian had gone entirely out of fashion. While men professed to respect the authority of the Church, and claimed to be, above all else, good orthodox Catholics, the whole policy of their lives was such as to destroy the faith of the world both in the Church's authority and teachings.

I have thus endeavored to explain how the two classes of men who have ruled Europe in modern times—the scholars and the rich—gradually established their power

in the fifteenth century in formidable, even if unconscious, antagonism to that of the Church. The result was a complete revolution in the ruling power of Europe, no less real because it was silent and gradual, and this power, becoming first the strong supporter of the national as opposed to the ecclesiastical policy of rule, and afterwards wholly identified with it, broke up the mediæval conception of life and its government.

This movement was accelerated by the inventions and maritime discoveries which, before the fifteenth century closed, inspired man with greater confidence in himself; because it gave him fuller control over the forces of nature and new power to make them minister to his selfish desires. Certainly it needs no argument to show that whatever other effect upon the general life and ideas of the time may have been produced by the general use of gunpowder in war, and the invention of printing, these changes must have very sensibly affected the position of those who had wielded absolute authority both in the Church and the State. They meant that power was being transferred from the hands of the few to those of the many; they were potent agencies, first, to instruct the many as to the desirable and attractive objects of life which were within their grasp, and, secondly, to teach the common soldiers of the armies for the first time in history that they had become by the use of fire-arms practically equal in force to those whose superiority in war, as it was conducted during the Middle Age, had practically overwhelmed

them. We may be quite sure that the sense of their importance and power, and of the possibilities within their reach, thus begotten among vast multitudes who for many generations had been only humble and submissive slaves to power, as embodied in the Church or the monarch, was the true germ of all the revolts against the authority of both which have characterized European life ever since the sixteenth century.

The fifteenth century was fruitful in these germs, which grew up and literally choked out the life of preceding ages. Not only were men's minds enlarged and stimulated by the results of the invention of printing, and their power against the old system of rule immeasurably increased by the use of gunpowder in war, but new avenues were opened about the same time to the fresh activity and energy of that class of the population, far the most numerous of any, whose special interests had hitherto been wholly neglected by those who governed them.

Among other means of gaining wealth and power which tempted the new-born spirit of enterprise and adventure, were those presented by the great maritime discoveries of the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century. These stimulated most powerfully the imagination of men who had just become conscious of their power. The discovery of America, the voyage to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan and his voyage through the Pacific Ocean, were events of momentous magnitude,



producing quite as much change in the moral and intellectual life of Europe as in the geographical notions which then prevailed. It was not merely that by these discoveries a new hemisphere had been added to the Old World, but that the new interests which were created by these discoveries totally changed the current of men's thoughts and opinions, and that, these interests becoming, as time went on, more and more important, the result was that from that day to this the relations of America to Europe have had a preponderating influence in determining the general policy of the government of the principal nations of the world. Commercial interests, industrial progress, colonial dominion, national policy in place of dynastic or family aggrandizement,—these have been the springs of government in modern times; and their source is to be sought in the discovery of America and the new methods of reaching the East.

The Church's authority, at least as an infallible expounder of scientific truth, was not strengthened by these discoveries. Her cosmogony, by which she taught that the earth must be flat and that there could be no antipodes, was proved, of course, to be fallacious. And yet it is worthy of remark, as a strange mingling of the old with the new, and as showing the general prevalence of the belief that the great object of maritime discovery was to make the inhabitants of the new countries Christians, that as soon as Ferdinand and Isabella had learned from Columbus the success of his voyage they made a formal application to the Pope (Alexander VI.) to confirm to

the crown of Spain the countries which the great navigator had discovered. And the Pope, exercising in the premises the power of the chief and universal bishop of Christendom, granted the application, and fixed as the boundary between the dominions of Spain and Portugal a line drawn from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle, one hundred leagues west of the Azores.

Another curious illustration of this mingling of the old faith with the new desires in men's minds in this era is found in the famous mediæval legend of Faust, or of the Devil and Dr. Faustus, as it was then called. The scholars of that day were allured by the secret of enjoyment as the source of strength possessed by the ancients, but they believed that they could recover this lost treasure only by the suicide of their souls, or, what was equivalent to it, the censure of the Church. "So great was the temptation," says Mr. Symonds, "that Faustus paid the price. After imbibing all the knowledge of his age, he sold himself to the Devil, in order that his thirst for experience might be quenched and his grasp on the world strengthened. His first use of this dearly-bought power was to make blind Homer sing to him; Amphion tunes his harp in concert with Mephistopheles; Alexander rises from the dead at his behest, with all his legionaries; and Helen is given to him for a bride. The story of Faustus is, therefore, a parable of the impotent yearnings of the spirit in the Middle Age, its passionate aspirations, its fettered curiosity, combined with the conscience-stricken desire to pluck the forbidden fruit."

Nor was this restlessness confined to rich men, or strong men, or learned men. It had penetrated deep into the minds of the masses, and gave token that a new era, that of an aggressive individualism, was approaching. This was manifested in different ways in different countries of Europe as the peculiar circumstances of each differed, but the spirit of revolt was conspicuous in all during the fifteenth century. In England it showed itself by a popular insurrection against the social evils of the time in Church and State, which is known in history as Jack Cade's insurrection. In Germany, where the mass of the peasants were so utterly crushed by the despotism of their rulers that no power of resistance was left, the same spirit timidly manifested itself in the popular literature of the time. The most remarkable books in Germany of that time are the *Eulenspiegel* (Owl-Glass) and *Reinecke Fuchs* (Reynard the Fox), and they both have this common characteristic, hostility to the existing social condition, and especially to the abuses of the Church. The fable of the fox is made a symbolical representation of the defects and vices of human society, and it is applied to the conduct of different classes of men, which is brought to the standard of the sober good sense and homely morality which are asserted to be the only true source of the claim whereby kings hold their crowns, princes their lands, and all authorities and powers their due value. Such were some of the germs which, fermenting in the popular mind in Germany, grew in fifty years with such amazing rapidity

that they form the true basis of the Reformation of Luther and of the Peasants' War.

This same era of transition, which I have called that of secularization, had its peculiar characteristics of a literary kind in Italy, as elsewhere. Ever since the days of the Emperor Frederick II., the free-thinking king of the two Sicilies, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the tendency of the writings of those who moved the popular enthusiasm was against the principle of absolute authority and in favor of individualism. This tendency showed itself by constant appeals to the human side of man's nature, as opposed to the old notion that man's position in this world was chiefly that of probation or preparation for a better state. Petrarch and Boccaccio, the great poets of that time, have been called essentially humanists. Their humanism consisted in a new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being, apart from theological determinations, and in the further conception that classic literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of intellectual and moral freedom. Out of the developments of these opinions grew the Renaissance, or the revival of learning, which was simply a revolt against the old theories of belief, made in utter disgust with their barren results, and using the free spirit of antiquity as an instrument of reform. But the history of this glorious revival and of its permanent influence upon the civilization of Europe does not come within the scope of these studies.

I have thus come through long ages of night and

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darkness to the dawn of that new day, in the splendor of whose meridian we now live. If I have taught any juster appreciation of our own modern life by showing how, born out of chaos, it has been nurtured by the gifts of the noblest intellects of all time, and its better part preserved amidst the strife and convulsions of ages, I shall have accomplished my purpose.



## APPENDIX.

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### BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

THE following is a list of books of authority, in French and English, concerning the history of the Middle Age. It might be made much fuller; but I have thought it best to give the titles of those books only which may be found in any well-furnished public library.

Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

Milman, History of Latin Christianity.

Merivale, History of the Romans.

Champagny, Études sur l'Empire Romain.

Arnold, Roman Provincial Administration.

Seeley, Roman Imperialism.

Dureau de la Malle, Économie politique des Romains.

Ozanam, Civilization in the Fifth Century.

Laurent, Études sur l'Histoire de l'Humanité.

Savigny, Droit Romain.

Guizot, Civilization in France.

Bryce, Holy Roman Empire.

Church, Beginning of the Middle Ages.

Coulanges, La Cité antique.

Coulanges, Institutions politiques de la France.

Boissier, La Religion Romaine.

Duruy, Histoire des Romains.

Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders.

Flint, Philosophy of History.

Ockley, History of the Saracens.

Irving, Life of Mahomet.

- Bosworth Smith, Life of Mohammed.  
Clarke, Ten Great Religions.  
Döllinger, The Gentile and the Jew.  
Lea, Studies in Church History.  
Renan, Études.  
Renan, L'Histoire Religieuse.  
Wallon, Histoire de l'Esclavage.  
Condé, Arabs in Spain.  
Coppée, Conquest of Spain by the Arabs.  
Finlay, History of Greece.  
M'Lear, Early Missionaries.  
Thierry, Récits Mérovingiens.  
Thierry, Conquête d'Angleterre.  
Amédée Thierry, Récits de l'Histoire Romaine au V<sup>e</sup> Siècle.  
Thierry, Histoire du Tiers-État.  
Martin, History of France.  
Mullinger, Schools under Charlemagne.  
Boutaric, La France sous Philippe le Bel.  
Boutaric, St. Louis et Alphonse de Poitiers.  
Cantù, Histoire des Italiens.  
Sismondi, Histoire des Républiques Italiens.  
Prescott, Life of Philip II.  
Freeman, Norman Conquest.  
Freeman, Historical Geography.  
Palgrave, English Commonwealth.  
Stubbs, Constitutional History of England.  
Hallam, Middle Ages.  
Pearson, History of the Middle Age in England.  
Creasy, History of the Middle Age in England.  
Green, History of the English People.  
Knight, History of England.  
Hook, Archbishops of Canterbury.  
Maine, Ancient Law.  
Maine, Early History of Institutions.  
Maine, Village Communities.



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- Rémusat, Life of Anselm.  
Michaud, Histoire des Croisades.  
Cherrier, Histoire des Empereurs de la Maison de Souabe.  
Coxe, House of Austria.  
Schaff, Church History.  
Ranke, History of the Popes.  
Villemain, Gregory VII  
Villari, Machiavelli.  
Villari, Savonarola.  
Kington, Life of Frederick II.  
Kohlrausch, History of Germany.  
Lewis, History of Germany.  
Hauréau, La Scolastique.  
Montalembert, Monks of the West.  
Lacordaire, Vie de St. Dominic.  
Olipphant, Life of St. Francis of Assisi.  
Lacroix, Arts of the Middle Age.  
Symonds, The Renaissance in Italy.  
Burckhardt, The Renaissance in Italy.  
Taine, Italy and the Netherlands.  
Newman, The Idea of a University.  
Maurice, Mediæval Philosophy.  
Thornton, History of Labor.  
Thorold Rogers, History of Prices.  
Draper, Intellectual Development of Europe.  
Lecky, History of Rationalism.  
Lecky, History of European Morals.  
Doniol, Histoire des Classes ouvrières.  
Vinçard, Histoire du Travail.  
Levasseur, Les Classes ouvrières.  
Depping, Histoire du Commerce dans le Lévánt.  
Worn, Histoire de la Ligue Hanséatique.  
Camden Society's publications.



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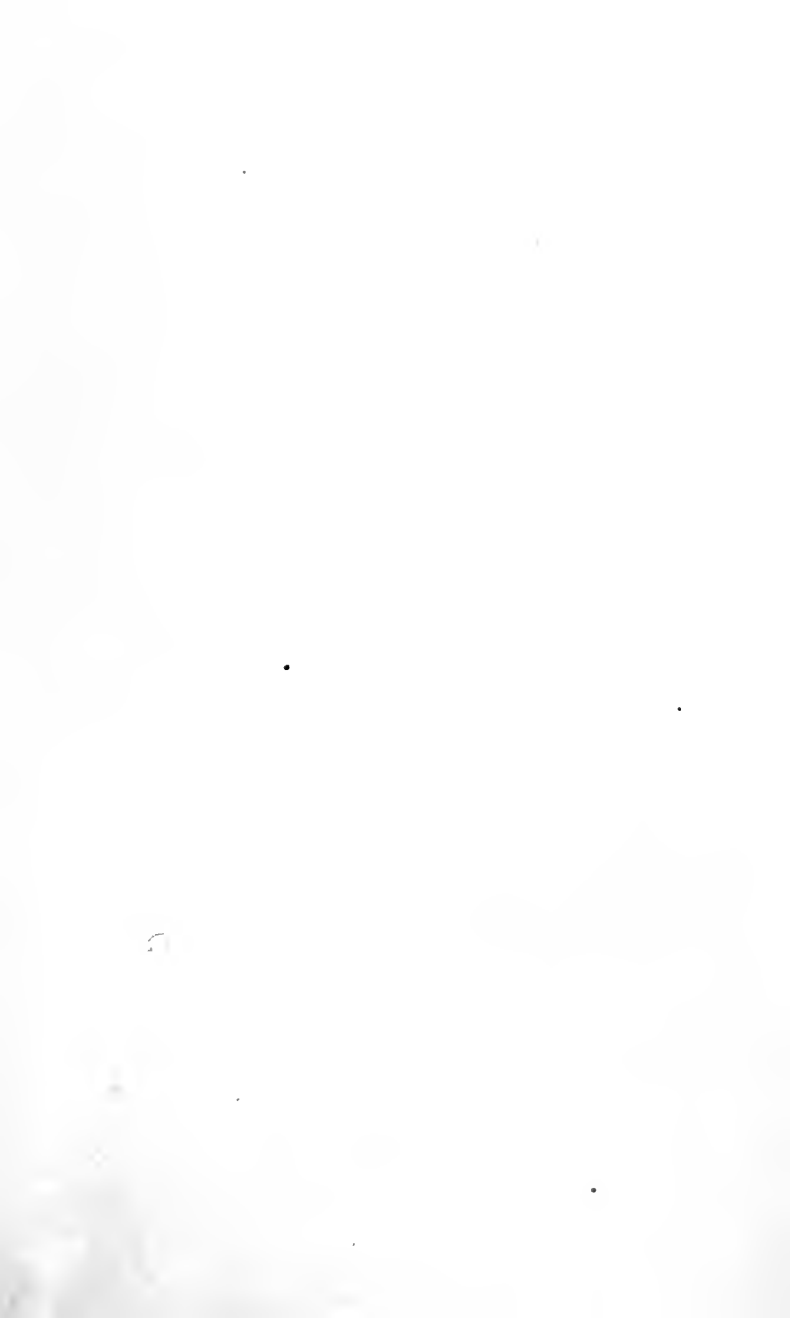
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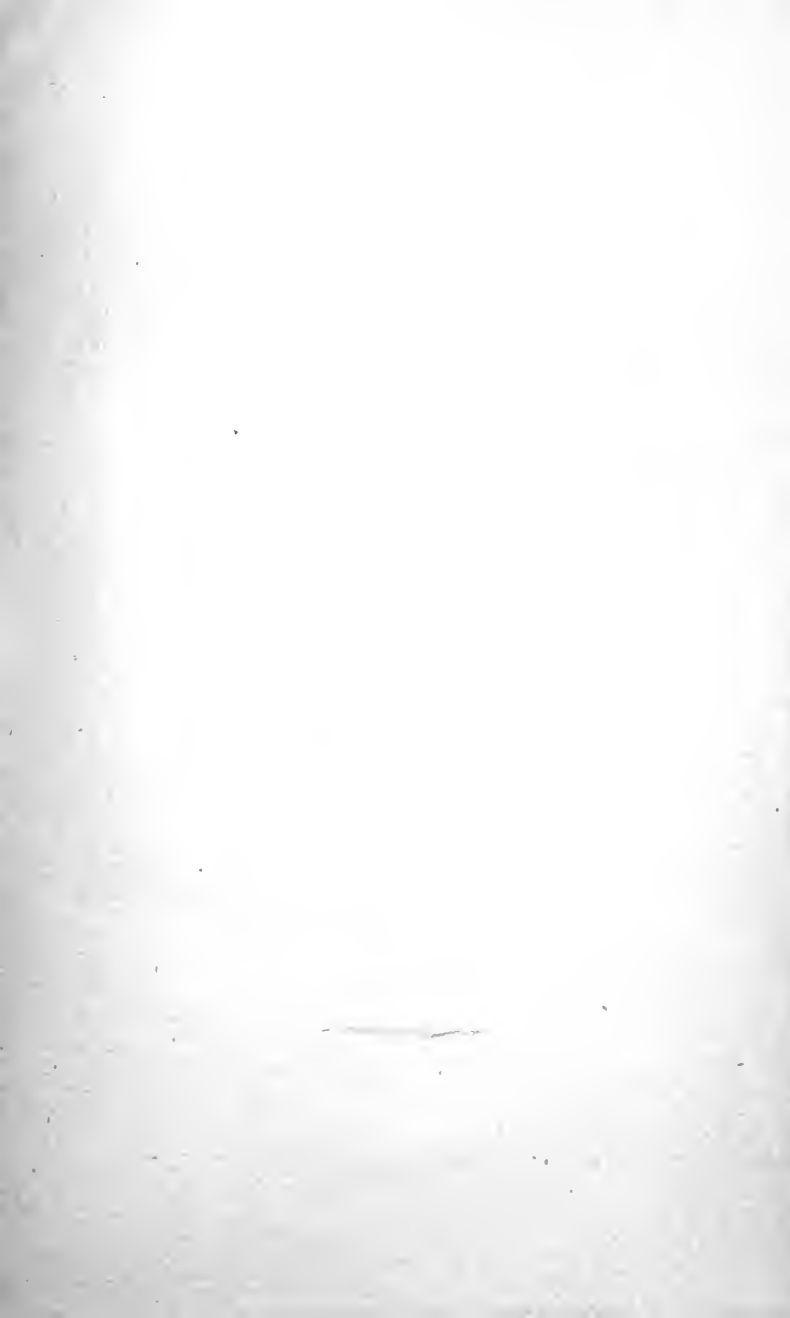




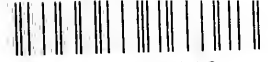












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